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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this pilot study were to study the operation of the farm labor market in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, to analyze the functions of the labor market institutions in the Valley, and to formulate a series of policy recommendations to assist in relieving the short and long run problems of both farm workers and employers. Interviews were conducted with area residents--community, governmental, agricultural, and labor leaders; farm operators; crew leaders; private labor recruiters; and farm worker household heads. The findings indicated that the Texas Employment Commission (TEC) tends to be used primarily as a last resort by farm workers interviewed because of the low probability of jobs being available. Employers are more likely to use the TEC placement facilities, mainly to satisfy peak seasonal labor requirements, than were workers. Most of the household heads migrated out of the Valley and, on the average, were employed 30 weeks, were unemployed 13 weeks, and were not in the labor force 9 weeks in 1968. Annual earnings of household heads was $1,695, while family income averaged $3,350, reflecting earnings of several wage earners. Some recommendations were to improve the scheduling of work for migrants, to eliminate or control commuters, to improve agricultural employment practices, and to encourage permanent migration or resettlement. (HBC)

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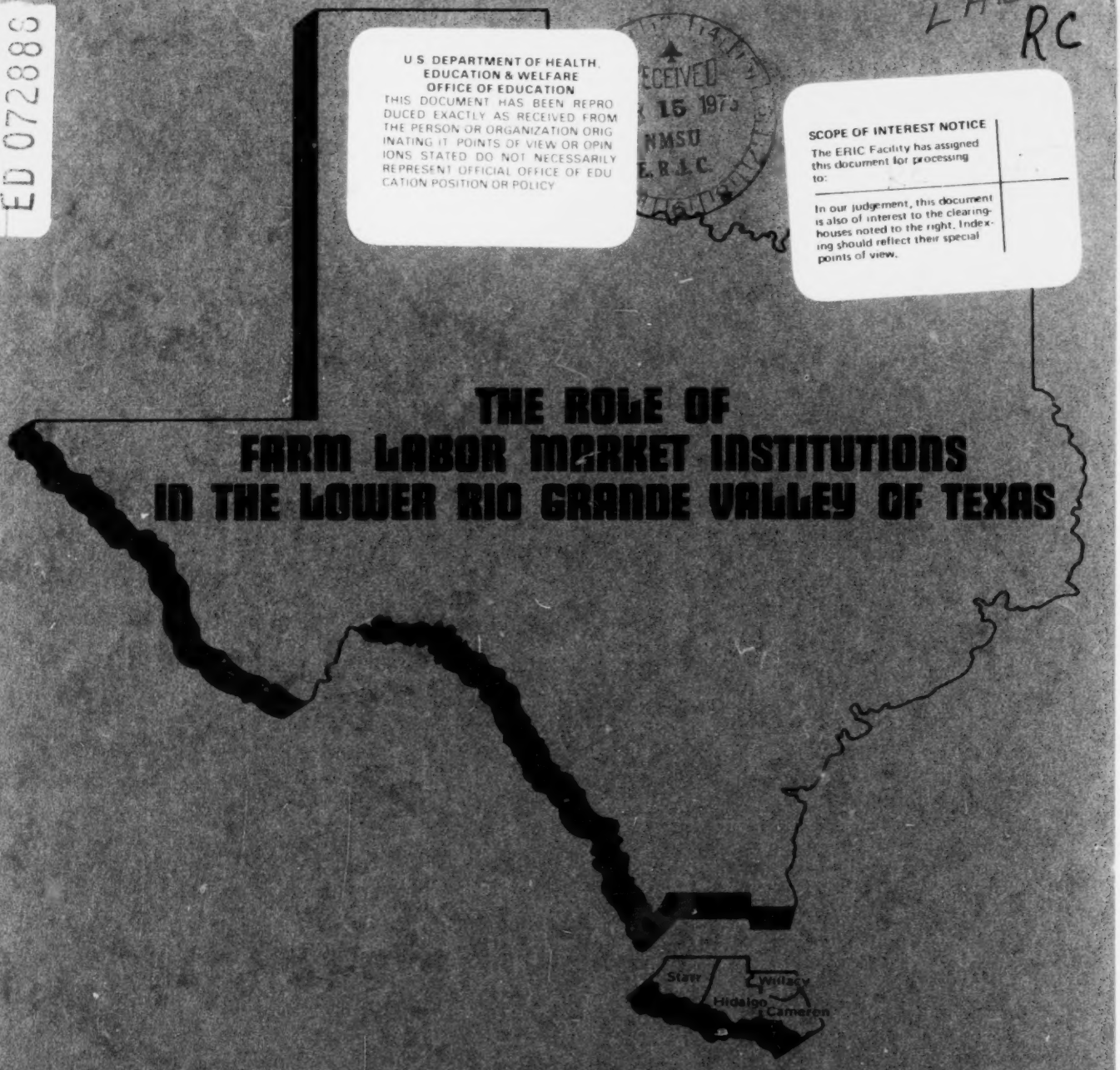

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THE ROLE OF FARM LABOR MARKET INSTITUTIONS IN THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS

Paul B. Miller

Wright State University

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Department of Economics
Texas A&M University
College Station

December, 1971

PREFACE

Over the last quarter century there has been a rapid increase in the application of technology and improved capital equipment in agriculture, which has boosted productivity. However, at the same time the share of the consumer dollar spent for agricultural products has declined. As a result of these developments, the employment of farm labor has decreased an average of approximately 200,000 per year for several years. To compound the problems for farm workers, the elimination of agricultural jobs has not occurred in a consistent predictable pattern because the production of certain commodities has been completely mechanized while others have experienced little change. Therefore, incomes of hired farm workers, which are already low, are further jeopardized by the growing difficulty of finding employment to extend the active seasons of work.

In this context, the current research grew out of an earlier study of agricultural manpower problems in South Texas initiated by John Glasgow and the author in Starr County, Texas (in 1966), supported by Texas A&M University. This report is the output of a contract awarded to Texas A&M University to conduct a pilot study of farm labor problems in South Texas and how they relate to the national picture. The purpose of this project is to gather primary and secondary data on an important regional farm labor market in order to offer a more sophisticated basis to guide future agricultural manpower policy and research.

Because of the multidisciplinary nature of the subject matter of this study, a greater number of people than usual have assisted in the preparation of this report. Special appreciation is extended to Howard

Rosen, Joseph Epstein, and Lester Rindler, Office of Manpower Research and Manpower Administration, without whose financial and technical assistance little could have been accomplished. Although it is impossible to single out everyone else who helped produce this report, I am indebted to the following persons for their specific contributions:

--John Glasgow who assisted in preliminary research that led to this proposal while at Texas A&M University;

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INTRODUCTION

The farm labor market in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas has experienced dramatic changes which have created severe economic hardships for farm workers and increased the need for effective labor market institutions. Shifts in the methods and type of production in addition to the inability to expand the demand for Valley products have reduced labor requirements. Although there has been a discontinuance of the use of braceros, Mexican residents commute across the border or enter the United States illegally to compete with Valley residents for jobs. A general labor surplus, which exists much of the year, depresses wage rates and shortens the work year causing a reduction in annual family incomes to the point that many Valley farm workers must join the annual migratory cycle. Lack of non-farm jobs in the Valley, as well as the limited education and skills of the farm workers, restrict the alternatives available to either supplement farm income or to make geographic, and/or occupational shifts. Improvements are needed to make labor market institutions more responsive to the specific problems of Mexican American farm workers in order for workers to survive in a transitional labor market.

This project was undertaken to study the operation of the farm labor market in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, analyze the functions of the labor market institutions in the Valley, and formulate a series of policy recommendations to assist in relieving the short and long run problems of both farm workers and employers. Interviews were conducted with area residents--community, governmental, agricultural, and labor leaders; farm operators; crew leaders; private labor recruiters; and farm worker household heads--to gather information on Valley labor problems. Although the major thrust of the research report is economic, extensive time and effort

has been devoted to presenting some of the cultural factors affecting the employment behavior of Mexican American farm workers.

Summary of Findings

Principal labor market institutions in the Valley are crew leaders, agricultural employers, Texas Employment Commission (TEC), and private labor recruiters. Crew leaders play a vital role in matching people with jobs both inside the Valley and on the road, particularly for farm workers who tend to use crew leaders rather than the TEC. To schedule jobs away from the Valley, crew leaders rely heavily on the Annual Worker Plan.

In general, there is a surplus of labor in the Valley except in isolated cases--e.g., when crops mature late and the bulk of the workers already have migrated. Employers interviewed tended to use the placement facilities of the TEC more frequently than either crew leaders or farm workers. Wage rates are normally determined by shipper-grower associations at the beginning of the season, but often are changed within the season to reflect fluctuations in prices of retail and wholesale products. Wages paid workers and personnel policies of Valley farm operators differ from out-of-Valley farmers policies creating animosity between some farm workers and their employers. In anticipation of labor shortages, agricultural employers are shifting to less labor intensive commodities and mechanizing. Absentee ownership of land, a large number of small production units, and a complicated shipper controlled marketing system characterizes the structure of agriculture in the Valley. However, local farm operators have traditionally refused to participate in cooperative efforts which could help small operators break the control of shipper-grower groups.

The TEC tends to be used primarily as a last resort by farm workers interviewed because of the low probability of jobs being available. Many

believed the TEC discriminated against farm workers by not giving them non-farm jobs, which the applicants believed to be available at the time of registration. Employers are more likely to use the TEC placement facilities than farm workers, mainly to satisfy peak seasonal labor requirements. Private labor recruiters are considered as competitors to the TEC in filling orders for out of state employers operating either as company agents or as independent entrepreneurs. Private recruiters send over one-fourth of the total migrants who leave Texas annually normally specializing in recruiting either males (mostly from Mexico) or families (mostly from Texas). These agents are considered undesirable influences by local employers, therefore, are taxed heavily. Migrants suffer severe problems obtaining labor market information while traveling. Even though about half of the work time on the road is typically arranged before leaving South Texas a great deal of work time is lost due to poor scheduling and inclement weather.

The average Valley farm worker household head interviewed was male, 45 years of age, married, completed one year of school, Mexican American, born in Texas, done farm work for most of their work life, and headed a family of over six people, of which about half of the members worked. Most of the household heads migrated out of the Valley and, on the average, were employed 30 weeks, unemployed 13 weeks, and not in the labor force 9 weeks in 1968. Annual earnings of household heads was $1,695, while family income averaged $3,350 reflecting earnings of several wage earners. Male heads monthly earnings varied from $134 in February to $266 in September, female heads $87 in February to $161 in June and combined earnings of additional working household members varied from $129 in December to $449 in August. Because of their low incomes and transient work status, most farm worker families lived in small substandard housing units, poorly furnished

and without modern bathroom facilities. Also, even though adequate transportation is vital to regular employment, most workers possessed old vehicles, many needing extensive repairs.

Any programs designed to shift people out of agriculture must take into consideration not only economic but cultural and educational barriers as well. In general, parents want their children to remain in school then choose a non-farm occupation. However, the parents have had little non-farm employment experience and many are handicapped when forced to use English exclusively. Although the outlook for the young people moving into alternative employment is relatively optimistic, older workers cannot change without having guaranteed jobs waiting for them.

Recommendations

The effect of recent changes on the farm labor market in the Valley has been to place a tremendous burden on workers with very limited ability to hedge. Mexican American farm workers have little power to alter the economic structure of their current work environment themselves, yet are severely handicapped when moving to nonagricultural and/or non-Valley jobs. A set of manpower policies must be developed and implemented that both improve the potential mobility and expand the employment opportunities of farm workers. Toward these two goals the following recommendations are presented:

1. Improve the functioning of the local labor market.

   In order to improve the operation of the local labor market, it is recommended to:

   a. Step up the outreach activities of the TEC to provide more valid job information to individual workers.

b. Combine farm and non-farm placement facilities to eliminate alleged discrimination and improve non-farm placement opportunities for farm workers.

c. Upgrade and standardize the system of reporting employment and wage data so trends can be observed in the agricultural labor market more easily.

2. Improve the scheduling of work for migrants. An improvement in the scheduling of work for migrants can be achieved by:

a. Intensifying efforts to sign up people under Annual Worker Plan and crew leader registration programs through outreach representatives of the TEC or other agencies.

b. Conducting an in-depth study of several successful migratory crews, families, and individuals to determine key techniques or attributes that might be utilized by less successful farm workers.

c. Expanding the number of migrant rest stations and make maximum use of them as a source of employment information.

d. Stressing the importance of following the individual rather than the group, so that better information is available about the trends in the movement or labor market activity of individual farm workers.

3. Eliminate or control commuters. Commuters depress wages and working conditions in the Valley labor market, so a program must be developed to control the flow of border crossers--such as, not issuing any new green cards

and checking the passes of border crossers more carefully--and neutralize their effect.

4. Promote economic development in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. As a means of increasing the growth rate to create more employment in both agricultural and non-agricultural industries it is necessary to:
   a. Develop and utilize more area resources and improve marketing techniques for selling Valley commodities.
   b. Amend Section 809 of the U. S. Tariff Code, which allows unfinished American goods to be exported, processed, and imported back into the United States with duty only being assessed on the value added by cheaper Mexican labor.
5. Improve agricultural employment practices. Because of rising wage rates and greater difficulty in recruiting farm labor, farm operators must adopt more sophisticated manpower policies such as:
   a. Establishing hiring halls to supplement TEC branch offices and make it easier for individuals to obtain job information.
   b. Make comprehensive study of the utilization and training of agricultural labor to discover methods to increase productivity.
   c. Further research must be conducted to determine probable costs and returns of several alternative fringe benefit packages, which would make agricultural earnings competitive to nonagricultural incomes.

6. Encourage permanent migration or resettlement. In the short run, at least, the rate of economic growth will be insufficient to provide employment for all Valley residents seeking jobs, so to promote permanent migration there needs to be:

   a. A comprehensive analysis of the types of jobs Mexican American farm workers can adapt to easily, then either find employment for those qualified for available openings or develop training and mobility programs to allow full utilization of farm worker's talents and energy.

   b. An evaluation of the work experience of Mexican American graduates of vocational programs, who were former farm workers, to test the effectiveness of alternative training methods.

   c. An organization created to encourage voluntary migration out of South Texas and agriculture by providing counseling when needed and disseminating information about employment, housing, education, transportation, and health care facilities so individuals can rationally choose the best location to resettle.

CHAPTER I

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY LABOR MARKET

GEOGRAPHY

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is comprised of four counties: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy, located at the extreme southern tip of Texas. Of the 400,000 people in the region, 85 percent reside in Cameron and Hidalgo. Only Hidalgo has experienced a substantial population increase (9 percent) from 1960 to 1969, while Willacy actually had a 25 percent decline in population during the same period. The Valley is bordered on the east by the Gulf of Mexico, on the south and southwest by the Rio Grande River, and on the north by large tracts of sparcely populated ranch land (see Figure 1-1). This has given the area a sense of geographic, political, social and economic isolation. The closest major cities are Corpus Christi (1969 est. 214,000) and San Antonio (1969 est. 745,000); both lie about 100 and 200 miles to the north. Few population centers exist in between. Many Valley residents (particularly Mexican Americans) hold closer ties to Matamoros (143,000) and Reynosa (135,000), just across the river in Mexico, than to any U.S. communities.

LOW ECONOMIC STATUS OF REGION

The incomes of Valley residents are among the lowest in the United States. According to the 1960 census, 47 percent of the families in Cameron, 54 percent in Hidalgo, 71 percent in Starr, and 52 percent in Willacy counties had an annual income of less than $3,000.[1] These figures are low compared to 28.8 percent for Texas and 21.4 percent for the United States as a whole.[2] According to a National Planning Association study of projected SMSA incomes in 1975, the disparity will widen further. For example,

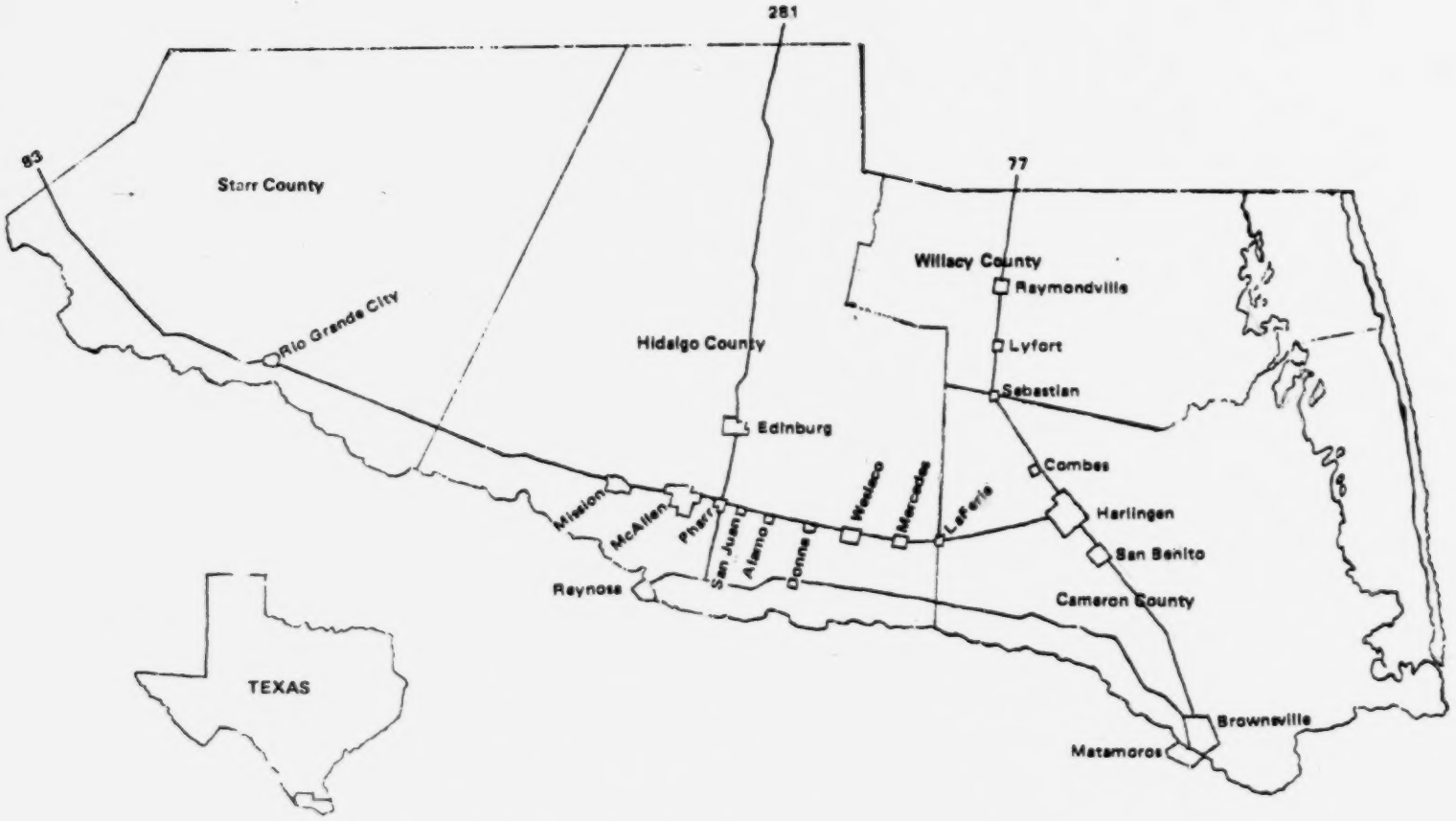

Figure 1-1

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

two of the three lowest SMSA's in terms of income in the United States will be McAllen, with an estimated per capita income of $1,615, and Brownsville, with $1,897 in 1975. By contrast, the NPA study predicts that the highest ranking SMSA, Stamford, Connecticut, will have a per capita income of $5,874 by 1975.[3]

TABLE 1-1

PER CAPITA ANNUAL INCOME IN SELECTED TEXAS COUNTIES BY COUNTY, 1960 AND 1969

COUNTY	TOTAL PER CAPITA INCOME 1960	1969	PERCENT CHANGE 1960-69	ACTUAL RATE OF INCOME GROWTH
Cameron	$1,279	$1,637	21.9	2.4
Hidalgo	1,133	1,253	9.6	1.1
Starr	763	1,020	22.2	2.5
Willacy	1,150	1,604	28.3	4.0
Dallas	1,905	3,065	37.9	4.2
Harris (Houston)	1,861	3,061	39.2	4.4

Source: Texas Almanac, 1970-71, (Dallas, A.H. Belo Corp., 1970).

AGRICULTURAL LABOR MARKET

The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas is an important agricultural producing region for both Texas and the United States as a whole. Like other areas, it has been experiencing various strains due to shifts in market demand, limits on traditional sources of labor, and increased use of modern technology in the production process. It has traditionally had a surplus of unskilled labor, so the problems of underutilization, mismatched supply and demand, and low income are particularly severe in the region. In addition, virtually all Valley farm workers are Mexican Americans, who often lack market mobility to migrate to urban centers and the occupational and/or educational experience to adjust to changing job requirements. Further, the transition from agricultrual to nonagricultural work is curtailed by the absence of a sufficient industrial base in the area to offer job opportunities for the surplus farm labor force.

CHANGES IN THE VALLEY LABOR MARKET

The general trend in farm employment in the Valley has been downward. According to the 1964 Census of Agriculture, the number of regular hired farm workers (those employed 150 days or more a year) in the four county area fell 13 percent between 1959-1964.* The total number of workers declined 10 percent in Hidalgo County (which utilized 58 percent of the regular hired workers) and 28 percent in Cameron.

Although the number of regular hired farm workers has declined in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the rate of decrease of the seasonal hired work force has been even greater (Table D-1). Total seasonal farm workers employed was over one-third less in 1969 than hired in 1964. Cotton still remains the most important summer crop while citrus requires the most workers during the winter months (Table D-2). The wide variations from crop to crop during the year reaffirms the necessity for mobility and skill convertability among farm workers living in the Valley.

Labor demand in the Valley since 1964 has shown a high degree of variability both from month to month and year to year (Tables D-3, D-4, and D-5). Braceros were used extensively to handle peak demands for cotton farm hands until 1965. Farm operators then utilized herbicides and mechanical harvesters over the next two years to compensate for the reduced supply of cheap labor. This fact shows up vividly in the decline in the number of farm workers employed during July and August.

The major labor market areas in the Valley are Brownsville--Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito (Cameron County)--and McAllen--McAllen-Pharr-

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*Census enumerators in 1959 asked how many people working during the survey period were regular farm workers, but the 1964 Census asked the employer how many regular farm workers he employed at any time during the year. The decline resulting from the comparison of Census data for 1959 with 1964 is even greater than indicated since the 1964 total is inflated as a result of the change in survey definition.

Edinburg (Hidalgo County). As indicated earlier, these areas hold about 85 percent of the population in the Valley and are contiguous. Hurricane Buelah had a severe impact on both of the areas from October, 1967, through February, 1968. Brownsville, which is closer to the coast, bore the brunt of the storm. However, the damage from flooding affected all areas and frequent rains prevented extensive planting. There were some fields still flooded six months after the hurricane. A look at the labor force estimates points up both the effects of Buelah and an increase in the degree of dispersion in the month-to-month farm employment in 1969 compared to the 1964-65 period. Residents of the McAllen area did not experience as great a drop in demand for farm labor as did those in Brownsville; in some months employment even showed an increase. All of these trends point out the need for labor market institutions able to cope with the problems of a dynamic farm labor market.

Wage data is very sketchy, but it is estimated that Valley wages varied from about 80 cents to $1.25 for working with each crop; the going rate was about $1.05 per hour in December 1968 (Table D-6). In the same year, the farm wage for Texas as a whole averaged $1.15.[4]

TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

The agency with primary responsibility for providing labor market services is the Texas Employment Commission. Its duties include the dissemination of labor market information, handling referrals, assisting placement, counseling, and other services designed to improve the functioning of the market and utilization of human resources. The Texas Employment Commission (TEC) operates local offices in the Valley towns of Brownsville and Harlingen in Cameron County, Raymondsville in Willacy County, and Edinburg, McAllen, and Weslaco in Hidalgo County. In addition to a downtown office in each

city, each office normally has a farm labor branch office located in one of the Mexican American farm worker neighborhoods in each city. Also, the McAllen office provides part-time service in the multipurpose center in Rio Grande City for Starr County. Farm labor offices appear to be well staffed with bilingual personnel. Most of the interviewers were Mexican American and had considerable farm experience.

Day haul facilities also were operated in four towns. Brownsville provided more placements than all of the other locations in Texas combined (Table D-7).* Also, Brownsville was the most active of the pickup points averaging 137 workers per day, while Hidalgo was least intensively used with only a 32 workers-per-day average. There has been a great deal of discussion about the role of day haul facilities and whether they should be continued. William H. Metzler believes they should be eliminated, as they tend to hinder the development of longer term employment relationships.[5] In the Valley, they tend to encourage the use of commuters to displace American farm labor. Also, in the case of Brownsville, some days as many as 200 people waited for jobs in the Spring of 1968; at the same time, growers in Hidalgo County claimed their citrus was rotting on the trees because no workers were available. Therefore, day haul points may not offer the best structure to most efficiently utilize agricultural manpower.

In addition to the day haul operations, the TEC has an extensive outreach program by which they try to contact both employers and employees. Representatives of the farm placement division are continually going out in the field trying to get employers to place early orders for workers.

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*Day haul centers are pick-up points maintained by the TEC where crew leaders or farm operators can come to hire a group of farm workers usually on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, many farm operators do not want to bother with it. They assume there will be plenty of labor any time they need it. Findings seem to indicate a need for more outreach activity on behalf of individual farm workers in order to increase their use of TEC facilities.

Valley TEC offices provide a vital link in the operation of the Annual Worker Plan.* In 1968, all TEC offices throughout the state completed 3,902 schedules which covered a total of 47,520 workers; 1,013 were crews, 2,506 were family units, and 383 were single workers not part of a crew. When registrants in other states are added in, some 99,527 migrated both inside and outside of Texas during 1968 who were Texas residents. Many Valley employers do not want local TEC offices participating in the Annual Worker Plan, because they believe this encourages Valley residents to migrate and they will have more difficulty getting adequate labor.

CREW LEADERS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE FARM LABOR MARKET

Crew leaders are considered by many people to be the most important institution in the seasonal farm labor market because of their role in structuring. They generally perform the functions of recruiting seasonal workers, arranging for employment in a series of jobs (often at a great distance from the sources of workers), arranging for transportation for workers (usually in their own vehicles), and acting as intermediaries for workers in negotiating for wages and conditions of employment with farm operators. In

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*The Annual Worker Plan is a service of the Farm Placement and Rural Manpower Service to assist migrant farm workers in finding jobs when they are away from their place of residence. Migrants are urged to register with the employment service and list their itinerary for the coming season. If periods of unemployment are observed on their schedule, the employment service attempts to fill in the workers idle periods from orders received from farm employers. The purpose of the Annual Worker Plan is to extend the work year of migrant farm workers as much as possible.

some cases, crew leaders act as foremen or weighmasters, or use their trucks for conveying produce from farms to marketing, processing, or distribution points. The relationships between crew leaders and workers varies — some are actually employers, paying social security taxes for workers and contracting with farm operators on a job basis, while others are essentially employees themselves. Some provide other services to workers, such as advances against future wages. The crew leader system in the Lower Rio Grande Valley has certain unique features, since crews are based on the extended family system that is characteristic of the typical Mexican American farm worker group.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CREW LEADERS

Twenty-five crew chiefs were interviewed in order to provide more information on how they function in the farm labor market. The characteristics of crew leaders, for instance, age and educational level, are similar to those of household heads since, generally, crew leaders are drawn from among household heads. For the most part, they had less than five (5) years of schooling, lthough a few reported some adult education courses, possibly indicating more than normal initiative and aspirations.

Generally, the crew leaders exceed household heads in length of residence in this country. During their long tenure in the United States, most of the crew chiefs (80 percent) had never lived anywhere other than the Valley. Data on longevity of residence suggests that it takes a farm worker time to learn the patterns of labor market activity and to develop personal contacts before he can operate effectively as a crew leader.

WORK EXPERIENCE

The employment record of the crew leaders was somewhat better than that of other household heads. A crew leader is constantly in the market;

and although he may not find work for all of the regular crew, he will still be earning something for himself. More reliable and efficient crew leaders are more fully employed than the less efficient ones. Also, he can go out by himself (possibly with his family) if only a few workers are needed.

More significant than the number of weeks worked was the higher income of the crew leaders. On the average (mean) they made about $25 a week more than heads of farm worker households, which accounts for most of the difference between annual incomes. The median income of crew leaders was approximately 60 percent higher than earnings of household heads, or about $2,900 during 1968. This figure includes, in some cases, payments for use of trucks for hauling, but not income of other family members.

Three-fourths of the 25 crew leaders in the sample worked in only one state outside of the Valley. Over half of those who left the Valley worked only in Michigan. Of the leaders interviewed, two crew chiefs worked only in the Valley, seven worked mostly in the Valley, eight mostly outside of the Valley, while six worked only outside of the Valley. These findings differ a little from the work locations of household heads, but the difference might be due to bias in sample selection. The greater geographic concentration implies that crew leaders may have more stable relationships with employers from year to year than do individual, free lancing households.

The activities which the crew leaders were involved in were mostly related to harvesting crops. About three-fourths of them concentrated in vegetables, most of the others in fruit. Farm workers showed a much greater diversity in work activity with nearly a fifth doing general farm work primarily.

ECONOMIC STATUS

Since, in general, the incomes of crew leaders are higher than incomes of farm workers, it can be assumed there should be evidence of a higher level of living. About 85 percent of the homes of crew leaders were valued at over $3,000, compared with only 15 percent for farm workers. One-fourth of the crew chiefs interviewed lived in houses valued at over $5,000. Approximately three-fourths had at least five rooms or, on the average, 1.5 more rooms than farm worker households. The average age of household furniture was estimated to be 10 years, or about the same as that of household heads.

Since there is normally not adequate public transportation available for work, workers must rely on private conveyances. This means that a car or truck in running condition is a vital factor in labor utilization. It is even more imperative for a crew chief to have access to good transportation. Almost all of them had trucks, and a third had both an auto and a truck, but the average age of the vehicles was about eight years. On the other hand, most of the farm worker households had automobiles instead of trucks, and one-fourth of these households had no vehicle of their own.

In arriving at judgments of the relative level of living, interviewers observed several other aspects of the residence--such as contents and surroundings--to indicate the availability of conveniences. It was found that one-third of the farm workers did not have indoor toilets, while almost all of the crew chiefs homes did. A telephone is a useful tool to learn labor market information, so almost all of the crew leaders had one. They also had electricity and water in all cases, and about four-fifths of the crew leaders had television sets. However, in spite of this, newspapers, magazines, and books seemed to be in greater evidence in farm worker homes.

CREW LEADER AS A RECRUITER

Because of their key position in the farm labor market, crew chiefs perform several important functions such as a recruiter, supervisor or manager, labor transporter, in addition to other tasks concerning living conditions and welfare of crew workers while in transit. All of these functions are important, but it is in his role as a recruiter that he makes possibly his greatest contribution. Being highly unstructured, as the farm labor market traditionally has been, it is essential to have a group of people actively assisting in arranging to bring workers and employers together, particularly when large geographic distances are involved. There is a lack of job information either of job openings or persons available to work. Primary reasons for this phenomenon appear to be the short duration of jobs in the hired seasonal agricultural labor market, and the limited use of established channels of communication for job information, namely, the employment service.

The successful crew leader spends a large portion of his time contacting farm employers and workers to schedule work periods to conform to the availability and preferences of the two groups. He makes liberal use of the telephone, and in many cases has to actually drive out to the field to make sure when it will be ready. Most crew chiefs in the Valley are self-employed; but with the increase in the size of shipper-grower production units, some are hired by the packing sheds on a permanent basis. This sometimes includes the off-season between crop activities when growers wish to make sure they do not lose their labor to someone else.

The role of the crew leader in attempting to schedule work is affected by irregularities in timing of crop activities. Due to the unpredictability of the weather, crops can be delayed several days by rain, or ripen early because of more sunshine. There are wide variations in moisture and the

type of soil from one field to the next. Many work days are cut short either by weather or because one field is completed but the next one is not ready to be picked.

One of the functions of the crew leader is to discover which farm operators need agricultural manpower, and determine the dates when workers are needed. Once that can be determined, then the work orders must be sorted and scheduled. Logistical difficulties are often formidable because of timing and the need to match a certain size crew to a given work situation. A successful crew leader is one who can provide the most work for crew workers at the best wage rates. Another function of a crew leader--to recruit workers--is apparently relatively easy since the crew leader is familiar with the sources of workers in his community. Only about a third of the crew chiefs experienced trouble finding good workers.

There does not seem to be any standard method of compensation for employees. When asked how the rate of pay for seasonal workers was computed, crew leader answers were evenly divided among straight-time hourly wages, piece rate or a combination of both. It is common for employers to pay on a piece rate, and offer a bonus to those who remain with the harvest until it is completed. Different crew leaders follow their own wage payment practices however. With one exception, all crew chiefs paid on a weekly basis. Almost half paid by checks as a usual practice, while the rest paid in cash part of the time--by check the rest of the time. As a general rule, commuters--those workers who live in Mexico and commute to work in the U.S.--are paid in cash and more frequently than workers who live in the Valley. Year around workers are paid by the grower; but generally, seasonal worker payrolls are handled by the crew leaders with the growers paying a lump sum to the crew chief.

CREWS AND THE CREW LEADER

Before discussing other functions of the crew chiefs, it would be appropriate to mention a few characteristics of the crew and its relationship to the leader. Typically, a crew will operate at full strength only a portion of the year and may disband his crew entirely upon its return to the Valley. A successful crew leader has less difficulty maintaining his work force and normally follows a fairly stable pattern of employment (by returning to the same employers both in and outside of the Valley) from year to year. The household head of many large families will act as agent or crew chief in their behalf. In some cases, several related families will team up and travel together as a crew. However, a less successful crew leader may have difficulty scheduling both workers and jobs to keep his crew busy a substantial portion of the time. If this happens, both the size and the composition of the crew are likely to be unstable.

It is common for a crew leader to work as a farm worker and then try to organize his own group. Only two of the twenty-five interviewed still worked part of the year as part of someone else's organization. In general, crew leaders were more perceptive of conditions in the farm labor market and less satisfied with wages and working conditions than farm worker household heads. Although they were very cautious in answering questions about income, they were very cooperative on other queries. They appeared to be very sensitive about giving information on their net income or percentage of total income going to crew members. The possibility of investigations by the Internal Revenue Service and wage and investigators no doubt influenced this reaction.

Most crew leaders have been active for a number of years. The mean years engaged as crew chief was eight years. Eleven of the group had performed this role for ten or more years, and five of them for over twenty

years.

Indications about the size of their normal crew also varied widely, making it hazardous to generalize. The mean size of crew was about 25; nine crew leaders stated they used more than 30 and eight chiefs used fewer than 20. It is generally considered more profitable to work larger fields and specialize in certain commodities. When asked if the size of the crew was influenced by the crop, 11 said "yes" and 14 "no". When asked about the acreage of the field, only six crew leaders showed concern. One can possibly conclude that other factors, such as the number which each person feels he can comfortably manage and find jobs for, as well as the size of his truck or bus, might also be important considerations.

Further investigation of the crop influence was pursued. Crew leaders' answers suggest smaller crews tend to be used more in cabbage, carrots, citrus, green beans, and melons. Larger groups tended to be used more in berries and pickles; tomatoes and onions did not show a definite pattern.

In order to develop some concept of the degree of shifting from one commodity to another, all of the crew leaders were asked their degree of specialization in one crop or activity. All but one specialized in harvesting of crops and 21 indicated they harvested only certain crops. When the crew leaders were asked in what crops they concentrated, no one mentioned citrus. This lends validity to claims by Valley employers that they cannot attract sufficient labor for citrus, particularly late in the spring. Of the other crops mentioned, twelve crew leaders worked in pickles, six in carrots, cabbage and lettuce, five in melons and beets, and four in tomatoes. A typical crew would work in only two different crops during the course of the year. When asked why they preferred those specific crops, crew leaders were influenced mostly by profitability and the ability to stay in one area longer.

CREW LEADER AS A MANAGER

Normally, a crew leader will contact prospective agricultural producers several times during the year. If he is successful in vying for the harvest job, the crew leader will arrive at a contract to pick the crop (normally by the field for each crop) for a set fee for the whole job. Many farm operators arrange to have a contractor come in and do most of the harvesting activities. In this case, it is the task of the crew leader to see that the crop gets picked, boxed, or bagged and, in many cases, transported to the packing shed. Twenty-two crew chiefs regularly used their trucks to deliver the crops to the packing sheds. In half of these cases, it was included as part of the agreement. Outside the Valley, delivery tended to be considered separate remuneration.

The agricultural employer does not take an active role in the hiring, firing, or supervision of hired seasonal farm labor. In most cases, it was implicit in the field contract that the actual handling of stoop labor be done by the crew leader. When production is more mechanized, the farm operator must take a more active role in managing harvest operation, even when a custom firm is hired to handle picking. All of the crew leaders spent the major portion of their time supervising their crew members.

Because of the concern on the part of researchers about manpower development and the future supply of skilled farm workers, crew leaders were asked if they trained new workers. None of them had any regular facilities or specific training program. Therefore, the burden of exchanging knowledge and disseminating special techniques falls upon the family head. As long as the Mexican American family unit remains close, there will be few problems passing the knowledge from generation to generation. However, there are indications that as younger members of the household stay in school longer, they are more likely to leave home permanently and

less likely to go into agriculture as a career.

CREW LEADER AS A SOURCE OF TRANSPORTATION

As discussed above, the crew leader is a valuable source for transportation services to convey agricultural products from the field to the packing sheds. Along with this transportation function are his activities as a provider of support facilities for his own crew members. Fifteen of the sample offered transportation services on a regular basis to their workers in the Valley. This consisted mainly of picking up the individuals at their separate homes, taking them to the field and then bringing them back after work. None of the crew chiefs had to provide either meals or housing to their crew while in the Valley.

As would be expected, crew leaders were required to arrange for more support when migrating with their crews. Twenty-one handled transportation from one job to another, as well as from house to field and back. Three-fourths of the crew leaders arranged for housing for all of their crew members. Most of them did this simply by informing the workers where there was available housing. Only one chief actually paid the rent as a standard practice. One-fifth of the crew leaders had to arrange for food while outside of the Valley. In most cases, this meant giving them a ride to town either for groceries or to eat in a restaurant.

CREW LEADER AS A SOURCE OF FINANCIAL AID

The last function to be discussed is how the crew chief assists his crew members during times of extreme financial stress. As has been mentioned elsewhere as part of the informal process to firm up labor contracts, crew leaders will borrow from agricultural employers. It is quite common for crew members to borrow from crew chiefs during the off season to insure a place on the crew for next year. Nineteen of the crew leaders loaned money

to their workers regularly and eighteen borrowed from employers as a standard policy. One crew leader said he only loaned or borrowed when the crew was in the North.

FUTURE OF CREW LEADERS

There has been a great deal of conjecture as to the number and role of crew leaders in the future. They perform so vital a role in rationalizing the harvest labor market that a serious vacuum would be created if they disappeared. Most experts believe the number is declining; regulations under the Crew Leader Registration Act of 1962 makes it difficult for them to operate, and has accelerated their departure. No one knows how many crew chiefs there are or what percentage of the total register with the employment service. Many family units come in and sign up with the local TEC offices even though they are not required to under the Crew Leader Registration Act. They do this in order to be available for the Annual Worker Plan. When crew chiefs were asked about the present number of crew leaders, only five thought there were fewer crew leaders, twelve thought there were more, three no change, and five did not know. Three of the five who thought there were less blamed it on mechanization, which decreased the demand for farm labor. Seven indicated there would be no effect from a reduction of crew leaders, three saw serious problems getting the crops out, while five expressed no opinion. In short, the crew chiefs thought there would be no sharp decline in the crew leaders. It is entirely possible that crew leaders perceived the market for their labor services as chronically glutted. The declining demand for seasonal farm labor creates an environment that, from their point of view, has too much competition; a few less would not hurt their position. It is probable the decline in crew leaders has corresponded with the decrease in farm jobs. When asked how

their conditions might be improved, they considered the need for increased income to be the most critical problem. After income, they rated raising the status of farm workers as the most serious problem.

Since there will be a continued decline in demand for farm labor, the crew leaders were asked what they expected to be doing in 1974. Thirteen (or just over half) said they would be doing the same thing for five years. Eight said they definitely would not, while four did not know. Many of those who indicated they expected still to be crew leaders expressed dissatisfaction with this choice, but saw it as their only alternative. Two of the sample own and manage small farms in the Valley as well as operating crews. Only four had worked at a non-farm job in the past five years, so they had very limited non-farm work experience. As an aid to the transition out, industrial vocational training could be more effectively utilized. Two-thirds of the crew chiefs stated they would like to take some type of training. Truck drivers, mechanics, and carpenters were the common choices of occupations listed. Apparently, these are the ones the typical Mexican American farm worker is familiar with from his own experience. When driving a great deal with very little money, they must keep their own vehicle going and cannot rely on commercial garages. Adaptation to any of these occupations could be achieved without too much difficulty if the demand for these jobs was sufficient.

CREW LEADER USE OF LABOR MARKET INSTITUTIONS

Faced with the difficult task of scheduling jobs of such short duration, it is important for crew leaders to have adequate labor market information. Of the 25 sampled, about half contacted employers directly when looking for work, just three checked the TEC while eight regularly used all standard sources available. Most of the crew chiefs indicated they only had a moderate

amount of difficulty keeping their crew employed, even though overall demand for farm labor has declined.

The pattern of employment for many crews tends to vary considerably from week to week, but from year to year it tends to be more constant. Eleven (44 percent) worked for the same employers this year that they did last year, while 6 (12 percent) worked over 80 percent of the year for the same producers.

Before migrating with their crews, most of the leaders do not have all their work lined up for the full period away from the Valley. While on the road, a slightly higher use was made of the public employment service to help them find work.

Although many farm workers are reluctant to apply at the TEC, crew leaders use it frequently, as it often acts as a medium to disseminate labor market information from the TEC to the workers. Even though the utilization rate was low, twenty-one of the group had used the TEC at some time, and only three of these were dissatisfied with the service (mainly because they did not find enough work). About half of them stated they had used the TEC at some time in the past to collect unemployment benefits (for non-farm work) and were satisfied with that service.

Private labor recruiters are active in the Valley labor market, so crew leaders were asked their opinions of how they were treated by the recruiters. A third of the crew chiefs had lined up jobs for their crews at some time in the past through the recruiters but, based on their experience, they rated the private labor contractors lower than the TEC. Apparently, crew chiefs are more critical of private recruiters than the TEC because they consider them as competitors for a share of the income from harvesting crops.

Many crew leaders hired Mexican residents (normally green carders)

rather than Valley workers. Oftentimes, there is animosity between aliens and domestic workers, so the crews tend to be all Mexican or all Valley residents. The most common reason given for hiring aliens was because they were thought to be harder workers. The restricting of the flow of border crossers would raise wages and offer domestic workers better employment opportunities in the Valley.

Finally, crew leaders were asked who had the most influence in setting wages. It is interesting to note that none of them mentioned themselves as major rate setters. Their answers were about equally divided among the commodity market, the shipper, and the grower, with the market being given a slight edge. Typically, a crew leader will contract with the firm operating a field to harvest it at a net price. Under this set-up, there is the temptation on the part of the crew leader to squeeze wages to increase his profit. Therefore, the crew chief does have considerable influence over wage rages, although this was not acknowledged by the crew leaders interviewed.

ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS IN LABOR MARKET

Philosophy of Valley Farmers

Most farm operators are Anglo American, quite conservative politically with a deep sense of pride in their state and region. There is a strong dislike for governmental subsidization, particularly at the federal level. Outsiders or nonresidents are welcomed cautiously. It is difficult for farmers to accept the idea of paying taxes for improving public facilities and schools, or providing welfare payments to transients and other low income residents.

Attitudes Toward Employees

Many Anglos consider the Mexican Americans as foreigners to the Valley,

and maintain a certain social distance from them. A common belief is they cannot be trusted with a great deal of responsibility. Many employers assume workers are highly mobile and cannot be relied upon to keep any long term commitments for labor services. They are not placed in a supervisory position unless their facility for the language is needed to communicate with workers. It is considered imprudent to advance large sums of money or make goods available because of the risk of loss. On the other hand, many out-of-state employers send down advance payments for travel expenses several months ahead.

Another frequently held view is that there is an unlimited supply of semi-skilled agricultural workers eager to cross the border and fill the vacuum arising from migrants dropping out of the stream in northern and western communities. The Valley now serves as a staging area, where second generation immigrants move out to urban centers throughout the United States in search for non-farm employment. As fewer people are needed in the migratory stream, fewer people return to winter in the Valley. They believe they are unable to settle in the Valley because non-farm employment is not increasing fast enough to absorb them. The Rio Grande River still presents only a minor barrier to a person with a little ingenuity; so unless immigration policy changes, aliens will become significant as a source of future labor. A number of people in the area believe that if the Federal Government would enforce existing laws the number of commuters would decrease. If so, then a shortage of skilled labor will develop, and wages would rise which could force farmers to accelerate mechanization. At present, in the absence of the minimum wage, large numbers of workers still work for less than $1.30 per hour.

Customary Forms of Payment

The attitude of most farm employers is not one of outright hostility

toward employees, as much as a lack of understanding of human behavior. Industrial relations in the Valley are characterized by the traditional agricultural approach, with workers expected to display proper deference to their employer. Much of the recruitment and retention problem revolves around a paternalistic attitude toward workers and their families. There is a strong feeling of paternalism among farm operators and a tendency to overrate payments in kind for labor services. Non-monetary payments, such as providing a house, are often preferred by employers because they foster a greater dependency of the workers than do cash wages. However, most hired farm workers now live off the farm, and prefer their pay in money, plus what fruit and vegetables can be picked up daily in the fields.

Farm operators in the survey provide many perquisites. As a general rule, these were available for year-round workers primarily and for seasonal workers only while they were working. About two-thirds had housing available for year-round workers, but only a fifth for seasonal workers. Three out of twenty-five let year-round workers stay in a house while not working, but none of the employers would do the same for seasonal workers.

It is not difficult to see why farm workers and non-farm workers prefer to be paid in money rather than in kind. If they do not perform to the standards of the employer, they are out of a place to live as well as a job. This gives the employer more control over each worker. Most agricultural employers would rather hire aliens instead of resident workers because aliens are more tolerant of restrictive management practices. The bracero program was considered advantageous by employers, because being able to come to the United States was considered to be a privilege by Mexican farm workers. Under the bracero program, workers were drawn from labor surplus areas of the interior of Mexico as well as along the border. In many cases,

there would be five to ten individuals competing for each job offered by the recruiters. Due to the fear of losing the chance to earn high wages in the United States, Mexican workers could be kept in line with very little difficulty.

Illegal immigrants are alleged to be employed regularly on large ranches in South Texas under substandard conditions. The immigrants also can be effectively controlled by threatening to notify the U.S. Border Patrol, who will deport them.

In addition to housing, one-half of the employers provided transportation to both year-round and seasonal workers on an equal basis. The benefit was not extended to the same group when not working, however. Three-fourths of the farmers made all tools available to year-round personnel, while only about half did the same for seasonal workers. It is probable that the capital used for jobs normally performed by year-round workers would be greater than seasonal jobs. Therefore, the difference is likely to occur due to type of work performed, rather than job status.

Payments in kind, outside of housing, are seldom offered. Only two employers said they ever gave food, and then only to year-round workers. On the other hand, none of the farm workers sampled receive free food while working during 1968. The only perquisite mentioned frequently was emergency medical care. Two-thirds of the farm operators have paid for treatment for year-round workers in the past; about one-third also did for seasonal help. Two farm worker households had been able to receive free medical service at some time during the previous year, which was the non-monetary grant reported.

An important method of developing a binding relationship between an employer (either crew leader or farm operator) and worker has been through

the medium of credit. Employers and crew leaders often advance money or co-sign notes for workers at local finance agencies. The loan arrangement is then used to insure future work, since the employee will feel obligated to work to pay off his debt. One-half of the farm operators indicated they extended credit to year-round workers, while only one-fourth did for seasonal personnel. Twenty-one percent of households sampled borrowed regularly from their employers. Three-fourths of these households listed money payments as the most important form of credit. Quite often the advances are used to finance transportation to their job.

Labor Market Activity of Agricultural Employers

Although there has been a decline in the demand for agricultural labor, farm employers still need large numbers of workers for brief periods during the year. Since the termination of the bracero program, the difficulty of attracting adequate labor has increased, which has forced farm operators to increase their recruiting efforts.

The agricultural employers' needs for labor vary widely due to differences in the type of production, scale of output and weather, to mention a few considerations. For example, vegetable production is more labor intensive than cotton or cattle. Because of the consolidation of operations in recent years, the number of farms has declined; but the ratio of hired farm labor to all farm labor has changed. In the past, it was easier for unpaid family members to handle normal labor requirements. Because of the greater scale and application of improved technology, which increases skill requirements, more attention has been given to the recruitment process.

In general, the only growers free from labor problems are a declining number of small family farm operators. Many of the operators who have experienced increasing problems attribute their difficulties to a lack of

skilled people such as tractor drivers and mechanics.

Recruitment of Valley labor is carried on in several ways. The most important method of finding seasonal hired farm labor for larger employers is to contact a crew leader. There are no large employer associations operating centralized recruiting facilities. Shipper-growers (packing sheds who have vertically integrated by buying tracts of land) hire agents to circulate through the area during peak demand periods, making sure adequate labor is available and trying to schedule their work ahead. Large employers also use TEC facilities extensively for both year-round and seasonal workers. When an order is placed with the local office, the TEC often then contacts its list of available crews. Most of the employers try to get the same crews to work for them each year.

About half of all of the 25 employers interviewed used TEC facilities regularly for year-round and about 60 percent used the TEC for seasonal workers. A fourth went to a crew chief first, and the remainder of the farmers contacted other farm operators initially when recruiting workers. Two-thirds of the operators who used the public employment facility were not satisfied with the service of the TEC. Most of the complaints centered around a need to improve screening techniques (need to refer more highly motivated and qualified people) and the need to remove political influence (bias toward employees). Although there is some dissatisfaction with the TEC, it still remains as a very important source of labor information because of its day haul operation as well as referral cards. Quite often employers still contact friends of employees as a last resort.

Wages generally are set by the shipper-grower associations in the Valley at the beginning of the season for each crop. This is based on a certain size fruit or vegetable for piece rate harvesting. For year-round

or seasonal hourly work, the pay will be the prevailing wage. This tends to be a rather narrow range as shown in Table D-6. Piece rates will vary considerably as harvesting on a particular crop progresses, depending on the market price of the product being harvested. A worker representative at the recent hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor complained that wage rates were even changed in the middle of the day while farm workers were in the field picking. When asked to name the wage setters, farm operators considered commodity prices the most important determinant of wages. Closely trailing was their belief that farm operators were the most influential as far as establishing levels of pay. An additional question was asked to explore whether employers could project their labor costs relative to marginal revenue product of labor, and only one of the farm operators believed it possible to determine his break-even wage at the beginning of the season.

A complaint heard universally from employer sources was that workers did not want to work and good workers were hard to find. The traditional system of employer policies in the Valley does not appear to encourage workers to do their best. There is little room for bargaining by individual employees on wages and fringe benefits. No system of promotion is visible and daily pay did not seem to differ a great deal from worker to worker. There are very few employers who have even primitive sanitary facilities for workers in the field, and no provision is made for privacy. There are no luncheon or break facilities available in the average field.

In most cases, the burden of supplying special equipment (knives, gloves, hoes, tec.) falls upon the individual worker. Little concern is shown for providing safety devices on the job and injuries are frequent. Typically, the burden for this income loss must be shouldered by the worker's

family. When jobs are available the hours of work are very long. In general, agricultural work is ranked very low even in the Valley and, consequently, it is difficult to attract the best workers.

The migrants compare how they are treated out of the Valley with Valley practices. Since very little emphasis has been placed on trying to make a farm worker feel an important part of the overall operation of the farm, they may not have the incentive to perform up to their potential. Generally, the average worker believes he is being exploited by Valley employers when the migrant compares Valley personnel policies with out-of-Valley employment practices. Some examples of poor picking methods by harvest crews were observed which may reflect the attitude of Valley workers toward employers. When they go to work and adverse weather conditions develop, they are often quick to leave or, on the job, they may leave large quantities of produce in the fields. Many migrants choose not to work in the Valley if their incomes are high enough during the annual migration, or if they have to work in the Valley, try to avoid employers with the poorest employment practices.

LABOR PROBLEMS OF EMPLOYERS

It was not surprising that almost all employers stated they had problems getting good workers (an exception was a small farmer with a large family who indicated he never used hired labor). Although farm operators experienced some difficulty in finding adequate labor, the alleged shortage caused inconveniences rather than interruptions in farming operations. Answers of employers indicated they had more difficulty meeting the need for seasonal manpower than for year-round. In the case of seasonal labor needs, the number and skill level were given the same weight. On the other hand, for year-round workers, lack of skilled labor was more of a problem

than availability. This no doubt reflects the more varied requirements of year-round jobs versus normal skills used in harvesting. Machine operators command premium wages out of the Valley, so they migrate to take advantage of pay differentials.

The difficulty of recruiting adequate labor varied among crops. There was little or no problem attracting labor for the sorghum and cotton harvest, but shortages during the pre-harvest period occassionally occurred. On the other hand, vegetable producers had the greatest difficulty hiring workers at harvest time and less during the pre-harvest period. Citrus growers indicated they experienced problems both during pre-harvest and harvest. The supply of citrus pickers sometimes becomes short if cold weather pushes the harvest late in the spring since a lot of the migrants move out in early April.

Most farmers interviewed have the greatest trouble finding workers to irrigate fields on a regular basis. Irrigators must keep a constant watch over the water when it is flowing and also gauge the rate of flow carefully. Moving the pipes can be strenuous work. Most workers prefer to have two people working a field at a time to spell each other for meals, etc., and for companionship. In the past, some irrigators have worked as long as seven days straight without relief.

When asked for reasons for their manpower problems, most employers replied that the better workers had left the Valley. A second reason given was the termination of the bracero program by the Department of Labor. This reply is somewhat surprising, since most of the braceros in the Valley worked in the cotton harvest, which has now been mechanized. Another factor contributing to labor problems in the Valley was lower wages. However, the minimum wage was considered the least important to Valley labor problems.

To ease their labor requirements and, hopefully, their future manpower problems, farm operators said they were going to raise more cattle and try to shift from the fresh vegetable to the processed market. They are attempting to stabilize and reduce labor demand. Mechanization will continue to spread. A shortage of workers, uncertainty about the appearance of contracted workers, the inability to rely on job performance were considered very important factors in providing an impetus for substituting capital for labor. Wage rates were important, but less than the other three. Of the non-labor reasons for mechanization, efficiency and cost were given most often. About one-half of the producers interviewed generally purchased their own equipment, while one-fourth contracted out for the work to be done. However, they added that the choice between a contract and purchase depended on the commodity being grown.

Consistent with the push toward the substitution of capital for labor is the consensus among agricultural employers that there will be a gradual decline in the demand for agricultural workers. Most farmers believed there would be an increase in the demand for skilled labor to operate the machines and this might cause temporary shortages during a portion of the year.

Most of the employers thought their recruiting methods would temporarily remain the same. There have been discussions between some growers and the Texas AFL-CIO about the possibility of setting up a hiring hall procedure. So far, the talks have been conducted on an informal basis. The area is very strongly anti-union, but employers believe changes in hiring practices are probable.

Almost all of the employers utilized some Mexican residents in the production process. About three-fourths of them found aliens a vital source of both seasonal and year-round labor, and over half of the Valley farmers

indicated that aliens would become a more important source of human resources in the future. Mexican labor becomes increasingly important as domestic workers leave agriculture and go into non-farm jobs. Agricultural employers do not differentiate between commuters and illegal entrants. As long as aliens will do the work, farm operators will hire them. The closer the border, the more difficulty there is distinguishing between a citizen, a green carder and an illegal entrant. All facilities, both public and private, are open almost equally to farm workers regardless of status (TEC does not require proof of citizenship to use its facilities).

In order to meet the expected changes in the labor market, farm operators will have to establish a formalized procedure for training people to operate more complicated equipment, or put pressure on public agencies to do it. When asked about on-the-job training, nearly half of the employers stated they had procedures for showing inexperienced workers how to perform the necessary tasks. Farmers were then asked how long such training should be for several activities. They ranked selected occupations as follows: general farm laborer, one month; irrigators, six months; and a tractor-machine operator, nine months. However, many farm operators did not treat these categories as mutually exclusive; for example, some considered knowing how to irrigate as part of general farm work. Therefore, the time distinctions between the three activities becomes a little fuzzy.

PRIVATE LABOR RECRUITERS

Private labor recruiters are very active in the South Texas region and tend to fill a gap in the labor recruitment and information system. They operate between employers and either crew leaders or individual workers; in 1968 registered recruiters sent 35,846 workers out of the state. In most cases, their functions are identical to the placement functions of

the TEC and competitive with the Farm Labor Services. Publically, the TEC states that they do not assist the private labor recruiter in filling requests for workers. However, conversations with other informed people indicate they quite often operate right out of local TEC offices, as well as their own buildings in Mexican American neighborhoods.

A private labor recruiter is generally one of two basic types: either an agent for a large growing and processing firm, or a free-lance entrepreneur. They are not bound by the conventional restrictions placed on the public employment service--for example, only filling orders from equal opportunity employers who obey state and federal regulations on terms and conditions of employment. There is a sort of mystique about their operations which suggests something sinister and illegal. Regardless of whether private labor recruiters function in a gray labor market or not, they are important, particularly in sending labor out of the Valley (Table D-31). Because they are effective in sending workers out of the Valley, local employers have put constant pressure on the TEC not to aid them. Consequently, there has been a certain amount of animosity between the Texas Bureau of Labor Statistics (the regulatory agency for private labor recruiters) and the TEC. The primary reason for the animosity between the two government agencies is that both are competing to serve the same group which each organization believes to be their exclusive domain.

Eleven licensed recruiting firms operated in the state of Texas in 1968. They earn their commission on the basis of fixed fees based on the number of workers sent. There is an attempt to screen each applicant to encourage repeat business from employers, but oftentimes the emphasis is on sending as many workers as possible rather than the quality of each individual sent out on a job. As a result, the longevity of most irresponsible licensed recruiting firms is quite short.

All private employment agencies in the state of Texas must be licensed, and are policed by a three man group from the Texas Bureau of Labor Statistics in Austin. There is a branch office in Edinburg in Hidalgo County staffed by a part-time secretary. Theoretically,an agent must get a separate license for each county in which he recruits. Every company pays a basic $600 state occupation tax, then in addition for each county, a $150 occupation tax, and a license fee of between $100 and $400, depending on the population of the county. In addition, each licensee is required to post a $5000 bond for each county to insure compliance with local laws. License fees vary widely; American Crystal Labor Agency payed the most, $6750 for 21 counties; three small one-county operations were assessed the least, $950. The larger the license fees, the greater the need to spread the costs over more workers (Table D-36). For example, Great Western Employment Agency paid $6100 in taxes and recruited 42 percent of all the labor used. A total of $36,200 was paid to the Texas BLS in 1968 for fees and taxes which primarily were used to support the BLS staff.

Officials of the Texas BLS expressed concern over the number of unlicensed recruiters operating in the state. The "pirates" may be employer representatives who are sent down to check on employees in selected areas, or may be free lancing entrepreneurs. Established private labor recruiting firms often send people into counties adjacent to the one they are registered without securing a license.

During the bracero period, private recruiters were active in handling the recruiting, transportation, housing, and payment of the immigrants who worked in fields. Many of the agents were Anglos fluent in Spanish. There are very few Anglos still active as agents for farm employers. However, many are still registered agents working for large out-of-the-Valley companies. Chiefly, these agents service agricultural producers and processors;

but now orders have increased for a large number of nonagricultural jobs.

Private labor recruiting farms actively seek out employers who need workers, and through the use of radio and newspaper advertisements attempt to attract enough people to match the orders. Money is sent by employers to be loaned to workers for traveling expenses. Amounts range from $20 to $200; $50 is the most common amount. Recruits are usually sent by either charter or company owned bus. These companies normally specialize in supplying males only or family labor. Males-only firms get 75 to 90 percent of their labor from Mexico and tend to operate year round. Aliens often will be higher skilled green carders who must leave their families in Mexico. Family exporting firms send less skilled people out mainly in the summer, and fill their orders with 95 to 100 percent domestic labor. Most of the family labor comes from the Valley, while male-only firms work out of El Paso, Eagle Pass, and Laredo. The sex composition of workers recruited in Hidalgo was equally balanced between male and female while over 85 percent of the workers out of El Paso were males.

UTILIZATION OF LABOR MARKET INSTITUTIONS

A series of questions were asked of farm worker household heads to determine their perceptions of the labor market and patterns of use of labor market institutions. Most workers (70 percent) believed jobs had become more difficult to find in the last five years. Forty percent thought a decline in the demand for agricultural products caused the difficulty, while 28 percent blamed it on mechanization. Over half of the workers thought the presence of green carders in the Valley job market made work more difficult to find and depressed wages. The most frequent solution mentioned was to block the entry of the aliens.

Workers were asked what channels they used in seeking a job both in

the Valley and on the road. In the Valley, crew leaders were normally the first contacted by household heads (43 percent), then friends or relatives (40 percent), employer directly (10 percent) and finally, the TEC (7 percent). When asked directly if they ever used the TEC, only a fifth of them indicated they had. Of the TEC services offered, about one-half of the household heads had used only its placement facilities, while the rest split up among counseling, testing, and unemployment compensation services. About half of the workers who used the TEC indicated they were satisfied with the service. The major reason stated for dissatisfaction with the employment service was its lack of ability to furnish jobs. However, a number of farm workers alleged they were discriminated against because they were not offered non-farm jobs thought to be available at the time. A major problem facing the TEC is educating farm workers as to the services available. Usage of the TEC is higher than the above responses indicate, because crew leaders normally contact the TEC instead of household heads and, therefore, workers benefit indirectly. The only substantive suggestion made by workers on improving service was to make both non-farm and farm jobs available to farm workers who register, not just farm openings.

Utilization of private labor recruiters, as indicated by this sample of farm workers, was very low. Only four household heads interviewed had used their service, and just one of them reported good results from the experience. The data in Table D-31 indicates a much higher proportion of the worker population utilize private recruiters than does the survey group.

Nearly half of the household heads stated they had used a crew leader's services recently and less than ten percent of the household heads were dissatisfied with the way they were treated. The fact that the crew leader is more aggressive in bringing job information to the farm worker is an

important factor determining his popularity. Due to heavy reliance on crew chiefs, should they disappear, a void would be created in the labor market system.

Finding employment while traveling presents a special set of problems to the migrant. It is important to have as many jobs as possible lined up before leaving the Valley. About half of the households were assured of at least 12 weeks work when they began to migrate, and nearly 30 percent knew where they would be working between 13 and 20 weeks of the season. This reflects a great deal of forward planning. The various sources of information to migrants when out of the Valley ranked in declining order, were crew leaders (25 percent), private labor recruiters, employer directly and friends or relatives (about 20 percent each), and the TEC (15 percent). In general, crew leaders play a dominant role, but private labor recruiters also exercise an important influence on out-of-the-Valley jobs. Scheduling normally is conducted by direct contact or by mail with whichever method of job search used. About two-fifths of the households complained of lost work time because of interrupted schedules; bad weather caused the disruptions in two-thirds of the cases. Many workers believed nothing could be done about lost time, but a fifth of the workers thought pitfalls could have been avoided if better labor market information was available, and if the employer had handled the scheduling directly.

Although some of the workers change employers from year to year, migrant workers move on rather well-defined paths with some degree of stability. Even though there may be gaps in their work schedules, they have a good idea where jobs will probably be, based on the experience of past years. For example, over half of the workers worked about 80 percent of their time in 1968 for previous employers. When on the road, over half of the household

heads relied on friends or relatives for information, and a fourth depended on crew leaders.

The mode of travel has changed in the past decade, reflecting tighter safety standards and mandatory liability insurance. In addition, greater mobility is needed to find the shrinking number of agricultural jobs, so practically all the families used either autos or trucks as means of traveling to out-of-Valley jobs. A mobile crew averages six members, about the same size as the average farm worker household, which is smaller than the average size Valley crew.

FOOTNOTES

[1]United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960, I, Table 86.

[2]Ibid.

[3]National Planning Association, "The Dimensions of U.S. Metropolitan Change," Looking Ahead, XV, No. 5 (June, 1967), pp. 5-8.

[4]Texas Employment Commission, Annual Farm Labor Report, p. 5.

[5]Opinion expressed during private conversation.

CHAPTER II

THE HIRED FARM WORKER FAMILY

A major objective of the present study is to provide more information on the hired farm worker family. It is essential to know their characteristics and work experience to determine what changes are taking place, whether the workers are able to adapt to the changes and what effect this will have on the future supply of farm workers. In order to obtain current data, 200 farm worker household heads were interviewed at their residences in Hidalgo County, Texas. Questions were formulated to yield both quantitative and qualitative information on the activities of farm workers and their attitudes toward recent changes in the agricultural labor market. Since the household head is considered the most important participant in the family unit, questions were directed to him.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FARM WORKER FAMILIES—SEX

The sample of household heads (Table 2-1) was composed of 166 males (83 percent) and 34 females (17 percent). This figure represents a higher proportion of female heads than expected; however, in some cases, the husband was present and disabled, so the wife was classified as head of the household. In general, a higher percentage of females means a lower income to the household and a greater degree of hardship for the family. Because 49 percent of the heads were 45 years old or older, the group tended to have many heads making low wages as a result of their advanced age.

TABLE 2-1

AGE OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD HEAD BY SEX

AGE	TOTAL		MALE		FEMALE	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
16-19	5	2.5	4	2.4	1	2.9
20-24	10	5.0	9	5.4	1	2.9
25-34	29	14.5	26	15.7	3	8.8
35-44	58	29.0	46	27.7	12	35.2
45-54	42	21.0	36	21.7	6	17.6
55 & Over	56	28.0	45	27.1	11	32.6
	200	100.0	166	100.0	34	100.0

EDUCATION AND AGE

A breakdown of the group on the basis of education reveals the problems of trying to shift farm workers to non-farm jobs. Mexican American farm workers are among the least educated workers in the United States since fifty-two percent of the household heads in the sample had completed less than one year of formal education. This severely restricts their job alternatives available, and virtually eliminates them from access to most federally-sponsored vocational training. As was expected, the older workers had fewer years of schooling than younger persons (Table D-8). Also, there was little difference between the educational attainment of male and female household heads (Table 2-2). The average education of the children was much higher than that of their parents, but still far below the attainment of the average adult in the U. S. Median years of school completed of children over 14 years of age was 6.7 years, compared to just under one year for household heads and 3.5 for wives. When all members are considered, the median education of members of the farm worker family, 14 years of age or over, was about 5.1 years. This does not compare favorably with the 12.0 years of education for the population 25 years or older of the United States as a whole. Disregarding the quality of their school experience, it is obvious that the lack of education combined with cultural problems presents formidable obstacles to upgrading or mobility.

MARITAL STATUS

The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas is a major supplier of migratory labor; most of the people go out as family units. (In the upper Valley area, many single Mexican residents are recruited and exported to jobs in

TABLE 2-2

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD HEAD

BY SEX

EDUCATION	TOTAL		MALE		FEMALE	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less Than One Year	104	52.0	85	51.2	19	56.0
1-4	52	26.0	45	27.2	7	20.6
5-8	39	19.5	31	18.6	8	23.4
9-11	4	2.0	4	2.4	0	0
12 & Over	1	0.5	1	0.6	0	0
	200	100.0	166	100.0	34	100.0

other states.) It is significant that 167 (84.5 percent of the household heads were married, only one was single, four of the group were divorced, 17 (8.5 percent) were widowed while 10 (5 percent) had separated from their spouses.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The average Mexican American household sampled was large; numbers ranged from one to 18, with the mean being 6.2 persons. About 3.7 individuals were above 14 years of age and of this group, 2.9 members of the household actually entered the labor force for a portion of the year. Female household heads tended to have slightly smaller families than males (Table D-9). In the 200 households interviewed, there were a total of 1242 persons--496 below 14 years of age and 746 at least 14. Of the total, 695 were females (56.0 percent) and 547 males (44.0 percent). The average age of the household members in the Valley (Table D-12) was younger than the Mexican American farm workers in William H. Metzler's Kern County Study in 1961.[1]

When age is considered in relation to the size of the household, those units with heads between the ages of 35 and 54 are the largest (Table D-10). The size of the household tends to smaller the longer a head stayed in school (Table D-11). However, since age and education are inversely correlated, it is difficult to interpret the findings and assign relative weights to each factor.

NATIONAL ORIGIN

Most of the farm worker household heads in the survey were born in the United States and resided in the Valley almost all of their life. One

hundred ten of the heads were born in the United States and of this number 104 were born in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Of the 90 who were born outside the United States (Mexico) and migrated to the Valley, 84 migrated directly to the Valley while the remaining six settled in another location before moving to their present area of residence.

The majority of the immigrants from Mexico had lived in the Valley a long period of time--nearly 78 percent had lived in the Valley over ten years (Table D-13). Also, there did not seem to be any obvious pattern to the age at which they left Mexico to move to the United States permanently. Normally, one would expect the shift to have occurred primarily at younger ages. In general, the average age of the immigrant at the time he entered the United States was slightly lower than the ages of brothers and sisters of the household heads who had moved out of the Valley to other areas of the United States. Because of the close cultural and family ties between Mexico and the Valley, the move across the border may not be as upsetting as an intercountry shift normally would be.

WORK EXPERIENCE - LONGEVITY

In most cases, the period that farm worker household heads were active in agricultural work (Table D-14) corresponds with the total time spent on the labor force. About a third of the sample did some type of non-farm job within the last five years, but normally it was only for a short time. Therefore, most of the workers had been doing farm labor for a substantial time span. For example, 53.5 percent had worked over 15 years in agriculture.

MIGRATION

Most members of the households worked part of the year in the Valley, and then left to find employment during seasons when no suitable work was available in their home area. Only 31 (15.5 percent) of the households remained in the region the whole year. On the other hand, just 26 families (13 percent) of the sample worked only outside of the Valley. Sixty-one (30.5 percent) worked chiefly in the Valley while also working outside the Valley for part of the year, while 82 (41.0 percent) worked mostly outside the region. The majority of the households who left for part of the year worked in only one state during their migration (that location might be somewhere else in Texas). About 47.9 percent worked in just one state, 32.5 percent worked in two states, 14.9 percent worked three different states, and 4.7 percent migrated to four or more states (in some cases Texas was counted as one of the states outside the Valley).

Although the household may have worked in several states during 1968, their primary location of work was defined as the state where they worked longest. Of those people who left the Valley, more went to Michigan than any other state (Table D-15), while Ohio and California were ranked next in order.

Larger families are more likely to migrate and work a substantial portion of their time outside the Valley (Table D-16). The fact that families with a larger number of children have a greater tendency to migrate intensifies the educational problems of migrant children. Present educational programs in the Valley are inadequate for students who can not remain in school the full nine months. Many locally controlled school districts in migrant receiving areas have not established special programs

to coordinate with educational experience gained either in the Valley or in transit. On the other hand--due to the economic pressure on the family, which forces all available members to be utilized--some parents keep their children out of the receiving area schools and contend that the accelerated programs in the Valley schools meet the educational needs of their children. Families with older household heads tend to either remain in the Valley and not migrate, or if they do leave, visit fewer locations. There does not appear to be any strong tendency for educational attainment to affect migration.

The migration process is a strenuous ordeal and requires good general health as well as the ability to adapt to each new crisis. Many of the children consider it fun to travel and "rough it." However, their view is not shared by most of the elders. Quite often older relatives are left behind to look after the property of the younger, migrating household members. This finding correlates with age as mentioned earlier so determining the impact of each variable is difficult.

Work experience in farm workers households vary widely by month in terms of the number employed, duration, and location of employment (Table 2-3). During most of the year at least one member of the household worked a portion of the weeks during any month. Naturally, during the winter most of the household heads who could worked in the Valley. However, as the weather improves outside of the Valley, the demand for farm labor increases which attracts more Valley residents into the migratory stream. The greatest demand occurred during July and August with most families working in the mid-continent states led by Michigan and Ohio, respectively.

TABLE 2-3

LOCATION OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS EMPLOYED BY MONTH, 1968

LOCATION	MONTH											
	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
Households Employed												
Alabama	0	0	0	1	5	6	4	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
California	9	9	11	6	6	10	12	14	14	11	5	2
Colorado	0	0	0	1	6	9	6	5	1	0	0	0
Florida	7	7	5	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	7
Idaho	1	1	1	4	8	8	7	6	6	4	1	1
Illinois	0	0	0	7	8	8	9	12	14	6	1	0
Indiana	0	0	1	1	1	5	7	11	10	8	0	0
Iowa	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Kansas	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Kentucky	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maine	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Michigan	1	1	1	5	16	37	49	40	14	10	13	0
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	2	6	4	2	0	0	0	0
Mississippi	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Montana	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
New York	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	0
Ohio	2	2	2	1	7	15	18	30	37	19	2	2
Oregon	0	0	0	1	3	3	3	2	0	1	1	0
Tennessee	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Texas	5	5	2	2	5	14	17	17	14	12	14	14
Utah	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	3	2	1	0
Washington	0	0	0	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	0
Wisconsin	1	1	1	0	1	3	4	8	5	5	3	0
Wyoming	0	0	0	1	3	4	3	0	0	0	0	0
Valley	133	140	162	143	92	44	39	38	62	79	123	133
TOTAL	160	166	186	183	182	190	194	193	186	163	171	159
Households Receiving No Income	40	34	14	17	18	10	6	7	14	37	29	41
	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

A serious restriction on the amount of money a farm worker can earn a year is the length of time he is able to work. Workers from the Valley attempt to extend their work year by migrating. Even though most of the households left the Valley the mean length of time employed for the heads was just over 30 weeks. After extensive interviewing, it was discovered that many of the group could not find work at all during part of the year and experienced forced leisure. Most of these workers did not seek employment while idle, because many felt no work was available. In order to account for this group, the category of "inactive unemployed" was used to distinguish not between those who wanted work and were not seeking it and those who really are in the labor force. Household heads experienced a mean of 12.8 weeks unemployment, divided between 6.6 weeks actively unemployed, and 6.2 weeks inactively unemployed. The average head could be expected to spend 9.4 weeks out of the labor force, which is high compared with most persons in the labor force and may partly reflect cultural preferences. Female heads of households had a poorer employment record, and more time unemployed or out of the labor force than the male heads (Tables 2-4, D-17, D-18, D-19, D-20, and D-37).

Farm workers spend considerable more time not working than industrial workers, but the period of time not working does not fit neatly the definitions established for traditional labor force concepts. For example, they may travel long distances between jobs, and have to wait for crops to mature or dry out. They do not even look for work much of the time in the Valley, because there is very little available between major crops. Although they are technically not in the labor force, they may be interested

TABLE 2-4

LABOR FORCE EXPERIENCE OF

HOUSEHOLD HEADS, 1968

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS[1]		
	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Average Weeks Worked	30	32	21
Average Weeks Unemployed	13	12	16
Active	7	7	6
Inactive	6	5	10
Average Weeks Out of Labor Force	9	8	15

[1] Exclusive of 10 heads of households who were not in the labor force at any time during the year

in, but not looking for work. This inactive time is sometimes used to visit relatives and make necessary repairs on their residences. In many cases, the workers are more properly classified as underemployed, rather than not in the labor force.

The tremendous variation in agricultural labor demand manifests itself quite vividly when one looks at the changes in man-weeks worked per month (Tables D-21, D-22 and D-23). Male household heads had their best employment record in the summer and their worst during the winter months while most of them were in the Valley. Generally, female heads worked fewer weeks than males. Female household heads worked the most weeks during June and the least weeks during October and January. Other household members (such as school children) were employed the most weeks during July and August and fewest in November, December, and January. It is imperative for children in large families to earn some money but they seldom work as long as the household head. Most of the children spend October through April in school.

WORK EXPERIENCE OF HOUSEHOLD

All of the farm worker household heads who were physically able worked at least a portion of the year. Six percent of the group could not work or would be classified as not in the labor force, while 94 percent were employed at some time. Of the 3.7 household members per family over 14, other than household heads, a mean of 2.9 or about 80 percent worked some time during the year with the median being almost two persons (Table D-24).

The time commitments of housewives will vary through the year and children are required to attend school during most of the year. Generally, a

migrant family will withdraw their children from school and leave the Valley in late April or early May and not return again until late October. As a general rule, the student will not enter school while the family is out of the Valley. This has changed because some receiving areas have started to both provide facilities and enforce existing compulsory school attendance laws. Also, several suits have been filed against farmers in northern states for using underage labor during school hours which may tend to discourage employers from hiring the youths during school hours.

On the other hand, in some areas of Texas, Mexican American and negro youths are alleged to be encouraged not to attend school because adequate space is lacking. It is estimated that there is classroom space for only two-thirds of the students living in some districts.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME - ANNUAL EARNINGS

In the group surveyed the median annual income of the farm worker household for 1968 was $2815, while their mean was $3350. In order to reach that high an average most of the families needed several persons working. An average household head made an estimated 14 percent more per week than a non-head household member. Even so, the median annual income for household heads was only $1425, and the mean, $1695. Male heads had higher incomes than their female counterparts. Median annual incomes of male heads was $1695, compared to only $834 for females. An average (mean) of 2.9 persons worked in each household; they contributed a median annual income of $1769, or a mean income of $2297, in the household in which they worked. In each case, only individuals actually working during the year were used as a basis for these calculations. For example, only 145 households had additional workers, so that total was used as the divisor in

computing averages of the income of additional household workers. For that reason, the mean annual income of the household will not equal the household heads income plus additional member contributions.

As indicated above, the number of the workers in the farm worker household will influence the annual income of the unit. Two families made over $10,000 during 1968; but in one case, six members of the household were working, and five members, other than the head, worked full-time at least eight months of the year. In the second case, ten members worked in addition to the head. Only nine out of 54 of one-worker households earned more than $3,000. On the basis of the evidence, the additional income of children is vital to the family income up to minimum subsistence.

It is useful to take a closer look at the family income by disaggregating the data for household members. Male household head income exceeded earnings of female heads; the female made only 45.5 percent of the median for males (Tables D-25 and D-26). In both cases, incomes tend to be lower for the younger and older household heads. However, the males were able to maintain a high income over a broader age range than were females. The 25-34 age group of males tended to have a higher percentage of people making more than $2500 than any other age group. But even among this group fewer than 20 percent earned enough to support their family above the poverty level, but only 3 percent of the female heads earned poverty standards.

In more than half of the households in 1968, the additional workers contributed over $1500 to the total income of the family (Table D-27). These earnings are extremely important in maintaining the welfare of the household during the year.

Regional data on wage rates for farm labor vary. Wages were higher in the north and west, and in other parts of Texas than in the Valley. Valley workers must either put in longer hours or have more members work in order to compensate for the differentials; but in most of the low wage areas there are not enough jobs available to employ the existing labor supply. As a result, it is not surprising to observe a much lower income by those who remained in the Valley and did not migrate (Table D-28).

MONTHLY AND WEEKLY EARNINGS

Monthly and weekly income data on household heads and other members of the household allow one to observe the variations in income over the course of a work year. Household heads (both male and female) had a mean weekly income of $52.72 while employed; while individual family members, excluding the head, averaged $43.18 per week.

Average monthly income for all groups increased during the summer months, which reflects the increase in employment opportunities outside of the Valley (Table 2-5). Male household heads earned their greatest wages during September, $266, while February, with an income of $134, was the lowest. The best months for female household heads were June and October with incomes of $161 and $160 respectively, while the average for February was the lowest. As expected more secondary workers were employed during the June through August period. During August, secondary family workers made $449, while December was the poorest month having earnings of only $129 for all household members combined, excluding the head.

TABLE 2-5

AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS OF EMPLOYED WORKER HOUSEHOLD HEADS AND SECONDARY FAMILY WORKERS COMBINED BY MONTH, 1968

MONTHLY EARNINGS	MONTH											
	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
	(in dollars)											
Male Household Heads	150	134	140	157	205	214	256	248	266	222	170	142
Female Household Heads	138	87	113	129	148	161	146	155	144	160	133	107
Secondary Workers Combined[a]	173	141	152	219	303	399	412	449	337	282	239	129

[a]Secondary workers are any household members outside of the head who worked during the year.

DETERMINANTS OF ANNUAL INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS

By means of regression analysis, a number of important variables were tested to observe their effect on household earnings of farm workers. Appendix C gives a detailed report of the findings when annual income of both households and household heads are considered. A summary of the results of the analysis is presented below.

When observing determinants of household income, age of the household head and home ownership were significant at the 0.5 percent level. This implies that as workers grow older, they become more productive and no doubt more knowledgeable of the complex farm labor market process. However, the implications of the relationship between age and income are challenged by other evidence, namely the fact that more members of the family are likely to be of working age among older parents. A very high status is given to the ownership of real estate; therefore, the incentive of owning one's home may contribute to higher family incomes.

As expected, the number of household members who worked during the year, weeks of employment of household head and the extent of utilization of household members other than household heads, were more significant (.01 level) in determining income than age of head or home ownership. These factors draw attention to the major problem experienced by farm workers in trying to secure an adequate income for their family: namely, extending the work year. By increasing the work year for the household from the normal 30 weeks to 50 weeks, approximately an additional $1,000 would be added to the households income annually. Although this one change would not eliminate all income problems, proper manpower planning could also increase the utilization rate of other members of the household, which would boost total income.

Annual income of household heads appears to be affected similarly by the selected factors. Both the size of the household and home ownership coefficients were significant at the 0.5 level. On the other hand, length of time household head was employed was significant at the 0.1 level, which reinforced previous findings on the influence of the number of weeks employed and the annual income of households.

SUPPLEMENTAL SOURCES OF INCOME

Each household head was asked if he received additional income during the year from sources other than direct payments for the production of agricultural commodities. Questions were asked about cash income as well as gifts. Eight percent indicated they had earned additional money; a quarter of these were paid for hauling produce. However, over half of the group received less than $150 and just three more than $350 during the year from sources other than farm work. Thus, the amount of non-farm work performed by the household heads was negligible--unlike other areas where farm workers combine farm and non-farm employment. Surprisingly little other employment is experienced either in the Valley or while migrating, since one would expect females to work as domestics or males on construction jobs to supplement family income.

PROBLEM OF INCOME MAINTENANCE

The wide variations in employment and income of the farm worker household put a severe strain on their limited resources. Because of the general surplus of labor in the Valley, farm employers are able to shift a great deal of the cost of dynamic market and weather uncertainties to their employees. There were no cases observed where rural manpower

planning techniques were implemented to even out the work year.

A farm worker family must be able to cope with long periods with little or no income. An attempt was made to find out some of the methods which were commonly utilized to ease the group through those periods of financial strain. Twenty-three percent of the sample relied on savings during part of the year. Only a small portion of the group received gifts from employer, church or friends and relatives (one percent from employers, one percent from church, and three percent from friends or relatives). There was a much higher incidence of borrowing; 12 percent received loans from friends and relatives, 22 percent from employers, and 45 percent from private financial institutions. Over three-fourths of the loans from employers or friends and relatives were in the form of cash.

Families who do not have access to private funds or who find those sources inadequate must seek public assistance from local and state sources. Twenty-five percent of the farm worker families received assistance from the welfare agency. Over half of the group received cash, 26 percent of the group were able to secure food commodities, while 14 percent of the group were given free medical treatments. The common myth is that the families are eager to get on welfare and return to the Valley year after year to take advantage of the public dole. But in most of the areas in the Valley it is sometimes difficult to meet criteria established by local officials. In the report of the Citizen's Crusade Against Poverty, Hunger, U.S.A., Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties were among the 256 counties in the U. S. and 30 in Texas where there was concrete evidence of chronic hunger and dangerous malnutrition.[2] Infant mortality rates average twice the national average; and less than 25 percent of the persons

eligible for welfare actually were receiving it. The Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs of the U. S. Senate recently singled out Willacy County as one which requires birth certificates for the children before mother and children may obtain supplemental food.[3] Of the 1,336 eligible mothers, only 207 were enrolled in the program.

ECONOMIC STATUS

Although many of the families lived in extreme poverty, most of the households owned the residences they occupied. Seventy-five percent of the heads owned their homes. The ability to identify with a certain piece of property is very important to the Mexican American household. Some of the farm workers have been able to accumulate enough money to buy a small piece of land, which they can farm, while they are in the Valley. If the plot is under ten acres, it can be classified as a poverty plot and receive a double allotment for cotton. Traditionally, the workers have not had much money and, consequently, little opportunity to own property. Now that this is within the reach of some of them, they give ownership a very high value. An additional factor contributing to the importance of home or real estate ownership is the transient nature of the life of the average hired farm worker. Forced geographic mobility creates a dynamic situation both in the local neighborhood as well as the work environment. Ownership of property offers some roots in an otherwise uncertain world.

The value of the home in which the farm workers lived varied from under $500 to $7,000 with the median estimated to be $2,300. Thirty percent of the households lived in houses of less than $1,000 in value, 17 percent in dwellings costing between $1,000 and $2,000, 19 percent

resided in quarters worth from $2,000 to $3,000, while 34 percent occupied residences valued at $3,000 or more. Of those residing in houses valued at less than $3,000, about 10 percent were considered to be delapidated, 40 percent average for the area, and about half clean and in good repair.

In terms of size, the number of rooms varied from one to seven. Only 10 percent had more than five rooms, while 18 percent of the households lived in houses with fewer than three. The typical number was four; so with mean family size of over six persons, living conditions for the average family are quite crowded. Since almost 70 percent of the residences had only one bedroom, other rooms had to be utilized for sleeping purposes. To add to the inconvenience of normal living, 43 percent of the farm worker household dwellings had no inside toilet facilities. There is no doubt that the inadequate housing and lack of conveniences combine to reduce the level of productivity of the household members and, therefore, the economic potential of the family unit.

Securing utility service in a low income area is often quite a problem. Normally, there are minimum numbers of households required before distribution lines will be extended to a new area. Even though minimum density criteria are met, utility companies are sometimes reluctant to invest money to connect residences, which consume only small amounts of product under normal usage and possibly none at all during long periods of the year. The degree of difficulty in obtaining utility service varies since the connection costs differ. For example, there have been more problems in acquiring natural gas than electricity. In the survey only two homes did not have electricity, six were without water (survey did not consider the source of water). On the other hand, 24 percent of the

homes did not have a telephone. Although a telephone is not as much a necessity as electricity and water, a farm worker can more effectively seek work by renewing contacts frequently by phone. However, a family on a limited budget must establish priorities for their consumption schedule; a telephone can be shared with relatives or neighbors more easily than electricity or water.

In order to determine more about the quality of life, an attempt was made to estimate the age and condition of household furniture. The furnishings of about 20 percent of the homes were less than five years old, but over 60 percent of the residences had furniture more than 10 years old. Thirteen percent of the families had furnishings, which would be considered in excellent condition, while 27 percent of the units were using furniture in poor condition.

In addition to the quality of structure and home furnishings, questions were asked to determine the availability of the more common forms of communication. Some 85 percent of the households had radios and 63 percent had a television set. However, as would be expected, considerably fewer had writing materials in view. Only 26 percent of the families took a newspaper, 32 percent had at least one magazine visible and 36 percent displayed books prominently. Therefore, low income Mexican American workers, like other economically disadvantaged groups, can be more effectively reached through the medium of radio and television than through published materials.

Quite often a motor vehicle is a vital link between a farm worker and his job. Naturally, it is important to a migrant family because of the hazard of being stranded in an unfamiliar place with little funds or

knowledge of the availability or the quality of repair facilities. However, timing also is critical when jobs are scarce and their longevity quite short. A worker's movement is severely restricted if he does not have access to adequate transportation. Without his own vehicle, he may be forced to rely on friends, relatives or a particular crew leader; this immobility can be detrimental in the Valley where jobs are scarce. Fifty-six percent of the households relied on autos, 20 percent on trucks, while 24 percent had no vehicle at all. Of those who had motor vehicles, 34 percent of the cars and trucks were under five years old, but 43 percent of these were over eight years old. About 80 percent were considered in good condition. Due to the age of most of the vehicles and the lack of money to have commercial mechanics repair them, most of the household heads are forced to become adapt at making minor and major repairs. However, with increased mechanization and a declining demand forcing people out of agriculture, the mechanical experience and aptitude may ease the transition to higher skilled farm jobs as well as to non-farm employment.

PROBLEM OF MOBILITY - SOCIAL*

Although one would normally not treat social mobility in the same context as labor mobility, it is relevant to the future supply of agricultural manpower. Even among Mexican Americans, farm occupations do not enjoy a very high status. Most parents want their children to go

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*A major portion of the following presentation on mobility is from a paper written by the author and published previously. See: Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Mechanization: Manpower Implications, Edited by B. F. Corgill and G. E. Rossmiller; East Lansing: Rural Manpower Center, Michigan State University, 1969, pp. 245-55.

into some higher skilled nonagricultural career, once he is old enough to leave home. A frequent comment during interviewing was that the children did not want to go to school, so the household head would at least teach them what he knew, which was farm work.

When asked, "Do you want your children to follow you and do farm work as a career?", 90 percent of the household heads in the survey said "no". Then they were asked how their children might best prepare themselves for a non-farm job. Forty-seven percent thought it best to learn a trade by taking vocational training, 37 percent considered more schooling essential, and 16 percent believed each individual should choose his route. In order to explore attitudes toward education further, heads were asked how much education they would like their children to receive. Seventy-seven percent of the heads believed completing high school was sufficient, while the remainder would like their children to finish college despite the fact that they, themselves, had very limited education.

The aspirations of Mexican American parents toward their children are significant. Almost one-fourth of the household heads believed completing a college degree was necessary for the future well-being of their offspring. A higher value placed on education will be useful in encouraging youth to stay in school longer. Wright and Kuvlesky found 13 percent and 35 percent of Mexican American sophomore high school students in rural South Texas wanting to work in high professional and low professional occupations, respectively.[4] These occupations would require a college degree to enter, which is further evidence that significant numbers of Mexican Americans consider education as an important vehicle for mobility.

Many of the farm worker's family heads feel they have no other job

alternatives available for themselves. On the other hand, the youths are better educated and receive much higher incomes than parents did at that same age. Skrabanek and Rapton found a significant trading up of occupations from farm to non-farm integenerationally.[5] Wright and Kuvlesky found that forty-eight percent of Mexican American male high school students wanted to become professionals and only five percent mentioned unskilled occupations.[6] Indications are, then, that rural youth are interested in leaving agriculture if the proper opportunity can be created for them. On the other hand, there is also a rapid decline in young entrants to the agricultural labor market.

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

With a declining demand for agricultural manpower in most areas, it is essential for individuals to be able to move to another occupation. Major obstacles to the farm worker groups' mobility include a limited education, inconvertibility of skills, and lack of non-farm work experience. Average educational levels of farm workers are the lowest of any occupational group. In this study, fifty-one of the household heads had less than one year of formal education, while seventy-seven percent had not completed the fifth grade.

In most cases, the shift to another occupation within agriculture is not as difficult as in the non-farm sector. For a hired farm worker there are a limited number of tasks with many requiring rather low skill levels. Seventy-seven percent of the household heads said they expected to be working in the same occupation five years from now. About half of these indicated they could earn the greatest amount of money in farm work, while 25 percent believed they were locked in since this was the only

job they knew.

Although skilled at farm tasks, this group of workers does not meet requirements of many new jobs in the labor market as a whole. The entry level farm workers is low in most cases and, therefore, they face a strong competition for low paying jobs in the non-farm labor market. Rural manpower often has difficulty adapting to the regimented, rapid-pace urban work environment. Ruesink and Batson followed the adjustment process of a large group of Mexican Americans who under a mobility project sponsored by the United States Department of Labor moved from rural South Texas to urban Fort Worth-Dallas.[7] Only about ten percent of the relocatees reported agricultural employment as their last job prior to relocation, but the experience of the group is worth noting. A majority of the group went to work for Ling-Tempco-Vought (LTV), where they were subjected to rigorous screening, and pre-training in the Valley, and extensive counseling and supervision by company personnel at the aircraft assembly plant in Grand Prairie. Also contributing to success was the fact that they were oriented and trained in a company controlled facility with high product identity, that they were assisted in finding housing as well as adjustment to the community. The results were phenomenal, indicating that, if subjected to an environment of the nature generated at LTV, low skilled, high ability people can adapt to a new job situation. The retention rate was 93 percent after two months and 68 percent after one year. In comparison, another project can be cited where a group of workers from South Texas went to a new job, in the same labor market, without prior training and without prior knowledge of what they were supposed to be doing on the job. It is not surprising that over 50 percent of the new employees stayed with the same employer less than two months.

INDUSTRIAL MOBILITY

Moving from one occupation to another quite often is combined with an interindustry transfer. Frequently, a complex move is necessary, as opposed to a simple shift along one dimension. Perkins and Hathaway found that movement to non-farm jobs would most likely occur among young non-Negroes having fairly high earnings in agriculture, previous non-farm work experience, coming from a high income county and being located within fifty miles of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.[8] Unfortunately, few of these factors are present in South Texas. However, experience with the LTV mobility project seems to indicate that some of the obstacles to mobility can be overcome. Choldin and Trout found that most Mexican Americans who have dropped out of the migratory stream in a Michigan sample have been able to change both occupation and industry without insurmountable difficulties.[9] Some 57 percent of their sample had shifted from farm work to operative and kindred occupations, while 68 percent had moved to manufacturing jobs. Although few reported such experience within the immediate group studied, about one-third of the household heads had held a non-farm job in the last five years. Of these, 91 percent had held only one job, seven percent two jobs and two percent three. Only 10 percent used the public employment service, while the rest split evenly between friends and relatives and going to the employer directly when looking for non-farm employment. Of those who had used the public employment service, half were dissatisfied with the handling of their application and/or placement. Among non-farm job holders, approximately one-fourth did some type of construction work, 15 percent automotive-related work and about the same number worked at agriculturally-oriented jobs. Only two household heads did anything which might be classified as

semi-skilled. The lack of non-farm employment experience by most hired farm workers points out another major obstacle to the shift of people out of agricultural employment.

GEORGRAPHIC MOBILITY

Texas has provided an important source of seasonal farm labor for many years. While most of the hired labor force consists of local workers, migrant workers form the element on the supply side which serves to counterbalance pressures on the market stemming from the demand side during peak periods. This annual trek following the sun provides a ready source of trained farm labor for more urbanized states in which migration to the cities has pulled most of the people out of agriculture. Growers like this manpower source because they do not have to worry about creating jobs for the people in off seasons. Traditionally, migrants did not stay and, therefore, the towns did not have to worry about cultural friction and supplying housing or public facilities.

Following the migratory path, rather than staying in South Texas, gives an individual or group the opportunity to work longer hours and make more money. In general, the Lower Rio Grande Valley has a surplus of unskilled human resources willing to work. The workers enjoy spending the colder months in the Valley where the temperature is more to their liking; and they are able to be near relatives and friends. While there, they are willing to work for much lower wage rates on winter vegetables and citrus, than prevailing rates in areas to which they migrate in the summer.

Michigan, Ohio, and Minnesota are the most important receiving states for migratory labor from the State of Texas (D-29 and D-30).

Our research in Hidalgo County indicates that most of the families who left Texas went to the Midwest, with Michigan being the most popular. Although a large number did not leave Texas, the average for the group was two states during the course of last year.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is an important supplier of migratory farm labor to the United States and Hidalgo County is the largest single exporter of the four Valley counties (D-31). Its share of the total supplied by the Valley has increased from 52 percent in 1965 to 61 percent of the number sent out by private labor recruiters from Texas in 1968. For the country as a whole, agricultural employment continues to decline, and the share of migrants has fallen to 11 percent of total hired farm labor.

OUT MIGRATION FROM VALLEY

Although birth rates are about 50 percent higher in the Valley than the rest of the nation, the population of the area has not increased proportionately due to substantial out migration. Household heads in the survey were asked a number of questions to gather information on the out-migration experience of people they knew who had left the Valley. In all, 97 brothers and sisters and 59 children of members of the sample had left the Valley.

In the case of the brothers and sisters, 57 percent were male and 80 percent of the brothers and sisters who had migrated were born in Texas; all of the remainder migrated to the U. S. Thirty-six percent had less than one year schooling, while 44 percent had greater than five years; this indicates that the better educated tended to leave the Valley.

The age at which they left the Valley varied, but seemed to be less concentrated among younger people than the investigator hypothesized. Thirty percent left before they reached the age of 22, 45 percent left between the ages of 22 and 45 and 25 percent moved out when they were 45 or over. Present ages of out-migrants were lower than the household heads, since only 25 percent of those who moved permanently were 45 or over; 49 percent of the heads had already reached the same age. As far as location of migration, 27 percent chose California, 22 percent were still in other areas of Texas, 12 percent in Illinois, 10 percent in Michigan and eight percent in Ohio, to name the most important. In all, they now reside in 18 different states.

Most of the females who had migrated permanently were housewives--only eight of them were employed. Of the brothers and sisters working, 39 percent were employed in manufacturing, while the next most important group was working in farming (34 percent). Their reasons for leaving the Valley were primarily economic; 54 percent sought a better job, and 22 percent, higher wages. Solving the critical problem of job information is a formidable task. Fifty-five percent received advice from friends and relatives but 36 percent struck out on their own, with no previous knowledge. There did not seem to be evidence that the move by the brothers and sisters was a poor choice, since only three cases of possible reverse migration were mentioned. The fact that these individuals owned property in the Valley seemed to be the most impelling reason for their return.

The experience of children migrating was somewhat different due in most cases to their lower age. A much higher percentage (92) were born in the U. S. Only ten percent had less than one year of schooling and 68 percent had completed at least five years. Naturally, the children

left the Valley younger than their uncles or aunts, and 63 percent left before reaching the age of 22. Destination of out-migration was similar to their older relatives since 24 percent settled in other parts of Texas, 24 percent in California, 15 percent in Illinois, 10 percent in Ohio and 8 percent in Michigan. Again, most of the females were housewives--only six were employed. Fewer of the children left to do farm work and more were employed in construction than were uncles and aunts. Thirty-five percent were doing construction, 35 percent were employed in agriculture. Their reasons for leaving the Valley were similarly distributed, with 58 percent migrating for better jobs and 29 percent moving in search of higher wages. It appears to have been easier for the children to move, since 69 percent of them secured preliminary job information from friends and relatives and only 24 percent left with none at all. As with the older out-migrants, few (2) people planned on returning to the Valley permanently.

In summary, even though making a permanent move out of the Valley to another home is a difficult process, it is occurring constantly. There are severe impediments to the out-migration, but they are not insurmountable. Cultural ties (language and proximity to family), economic ties (ownership of property), and lack of job information seem the greatest obstacles to the successful shifting of large groups of people voluntarily out of the region. An important factor working in the direction of making it easier to migrate is the existence of larger and larger colonies of former Valley residents around the country to help ease the transition period. Further development of an out-migrant location file would prove valuable to persons contemplating a permanent move.

It is difficult to assess the extent that education inhibits the movement of people. About 55 percent of the household heads believed their lack of education had handicapped them in searching for a job. Their reasons oftentimes were not too precise, but 40 percent of them considered their inability to read and speak English as the major obstacle. This group said they had difficulty learning a trade or reading instructions necessary to operate machinery. An equal level, 40 percent of the educationally handicapped, thought the quantity of formal education was an important prerequisite to many jobs. This group beleived the lack of a high school diploma kept them out of many jobs. The remaining 20 percent listed no specific problem resulting from their education deficiency.

POTENTIAL FOR TRAINING

Despite the low level of educational attainment and advanced ages of many farm workers, there are opportunities for their movement geographically, industrially, and occupationally. Their chances of successful adaptation would be enhanced by their shifting to jobs which had similar characteristics to farm work. Lawn care or nursery work would cause minimal disruption. The most important general attributes of the jobs would be an unstructured environment allowing a high degree of individual control and utilizing manual skills. Eighty-four percent of the household heads indicated they were interested in job training of some type. However, only 15 percent were interested in any vocational agricultural education. The remainder wanted to be trained for non-farm work. Carpentry and automobile mechanics were four times more popular than any of the other non-farm choices. It is apparent that there is an awareness of the declining demand for farm workers and a willingness by the majority to shift to non-farm jobs given favorable circumstances.

PROBLEM OF RETENTION OF AGRICULTURAL MANPOWER

The greatest problem for hired farm workers is how to increase their annual income. Fifty-five percent of those interviewed said higher wages was the most critical need, and 40 percent considered steady work, while only five percent ranked improved housing as most critical. If continued cyclical demand and an excess of labor is assumed during most of the year, there appears to be few opportunities to extend the work year in agriculture. Farm workers in South Texas currently do not have the power to force wage rates up. Even if this were possible, the long-run effect would be accelerated mechanization and further reduced labor demand. An alternative is to extend the work year by a combination of farm and non-farm jobs.

Household heads were asked if they would have worked longer during the year had work been available. Ninety-five percent said they would have, and 90 percent of these would have worked in a non-farm job if they had known one to be available. Most of the females (91 percent) thought their best alternative was to be employed as a domestic servant. A brief survey of domestic servant wages conducted in the McAllen area in March of 1969 does not offer much hope as an alternative to farm work. Although there may be many jobs for domestics available, the wage rates are extremely low. The mean money wage was about $15.00 per week with a range from $5.00 to $30.00. In many cases, this was virtually a seven-day-a-week obligation. Only in a live-in maid situation could total remuneration come close to the average weekly wage in agriculture. Most of the domestics were Mexican citizens who either commuted daily or stayed with the American family.

Male preferences were similar to the choices expressed when asked about

training. Thirty percent desired construction work, 24 percent mechanical trades, 21 percent machine operators, while 11 percent considered sales work as possibly an alternative. The potential for large numbers of jobs opening up in lower skill levels in the Valley are very limited. Therefore, until non-farm employment demand can be increased, their work year cannot be extended.

FOOTNOTES

[1]William F. Metzler, The Farm Worker in a Changing Agriculture. Giannini Foundation Research Report No. 277, California Agricultural Experiment Station, p. 31.

[2]Citizen's Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States, Hunger, U.S.A. (Washington: New Community Press, 1968, p. 97.

[3]Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs, U. S. Senate, Nutrition and Human Needs - 1970, Part 2 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 733.

[4]Dwight E. Wright, Jr., and William P. Kuvlesky, "Occupational Status Projections of Mexican American Youth Residing in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association, Dallas, April, 1968, p. 11.

[5]R. L. Skrabanek, and Avra Rapton, Occupational Change Among Spanish Americans, B-1061, Texas Agricultural Experimental Station, pp. 15-19.

[6]Wright and Kuvlesky, op cit, p. 20.

[7]David C. Ruesink, and T. Brice Batson, "Success Factors in Restraining-Relocation Program Involving Mexican American," paper presented to the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers meetings in Mobile, Alabama, February 3, 1969.

[8]Brian Perkins and Dale Hathaway, Movement of Labor Between Farm and Non-Farm Jobs, Bulletin No. 13 (East Lansing: Agricultural Experiment Station) Michigan State University, 1966.

[9]Harvey M. Choldin and Grafton D. Trout, Jr., Mexican Americans in Michigan: From Field to Factory, interim report to United States Department of Labor, pp. 39-40.

CHAPTER III

AGRICULTURE AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

AGRICULTURE IN THE VALLEY

The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas is an important production area for a number of agricultural commodities, both for Texas and the United States. Traditionally the middle west has been the major marketing region for these products. The Valley is the sole supplier of citrus from Texas and grows about 3 percent of the oranges and 15 percent of the grapefruit in the United States. The Valley supplies a major portion of the vegetables grown in the state of Texas. Snap beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, melons, carrots, sweet corn, lettuce, peppers, and tomatoes constitute the bulk of the vegetables raised in the region. Most of these commodities are marketed in the higher risk fresh market, rather than processed as in other fruit and vegetable areas. Florida processed 65 percent of its oranges, Texas only 30 percent; and the same percentage exists for Valley grapefruit.[1] Marketing specialists predict that a much larger share of both fruits and vegetables must be processed to meet future competition from other areas.

The mix of agricultural output has changed to match shifts in production and market demand. There has been a substitution of capital for labor as well as a movement toward less labor demanding products. A comparison between 1959 census of agriculture data and 1964 figures reveals a 61 percent increase in sorghum, a 17 percent decrease in cotton, a 56 percent decrease in hogs, and a 43 percent increase in cattle. Cotton is still important, even though production is less than in some past periods (Tables D-32 and D-35). Vegetables are often planted on the same land. However, some farmers have found it profitable to raise cattle on irrigated land

converted to improved pasture. This is illustrated by the increase in cattle and feed grain (Tables D-33 and D-34).

According to 1961 and 1967 data from the Texas Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, for crops, only cantaloupe output increased (300 percent) during this period. Acres harvested of snap beans declined 41 percent, cabbage 32 percent, lettuce 36 percent, green peppers 67 percent, tomatoes 62 percent, and watermelons 38 percent. The declines are partially overstated because of extremely wet conditions for part of 1967, but they do follow a definite trend.

Declines in the production of these commodities have had a profound effect on the demand for agricultural labor. Due to differences in the labor to output ratio for each commodity, decreases in production of some products have a greater impact than others. Even though the number of workers needed for cotton production has been reduced by herbicides and mechanical harvesting, cotton requires more seasonal labor than any other crop. Estimates range up to as much as 20 percent of the crop still being hand-cultivated. Hand labor is still needed for irrigation and, in areas where machines cannot operate, it is still economical to pick cotton by hand. Increasing opposition to farm supports cast a shadow over the long run demand for Valley labor from this source. If it weren't for the subsidy, many of the area farmers would not be growing cotton. Other crops requiring significant amounts of labor are onions, tomatoes and citrus, respectively.

Farm income has been a vital stimulus to the Valley economy, even though it has tended to vary widely (Table D-32). Total income from manufacturing in 1968 was only about one-half farm income.[2] However, retail sales, which were about equal to cash farm income in 1948, were almost three times as great in 1968.[3] This reflects the recent emphasis on tourism and

the push for Mexican trade by border towns.

Employers labor requirements are closely tied to the amount of acreage planted and the type of products he is raising (Chart D-1). Soil preparation and harvesting require the most labor, with lesser amounts necessary during intermediate periods for thinning, pruning, and cultivating. Citrus harvesting occurs intermittently from November through March and has tended to act as a stabilizing influence on the farm labor market in the Valley. Most of the other farm activities do not require the same large inputs of human resources as vegetables and citrus.

NATURE OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY

Most Valley farmers tend to consider the area and production problems unique. They are usually willing to try almost any new products but, as a general rule, have not been leaders in the implementation of new farming methods. In general, there has been a sufficient supply of unskilled agricultural manpower, so present production methods remain very labor intensive. Because of the lower wage rates, they are still able to compete favorably with California and Florida in some products. It is estimated to cost slightly more than one-half as much to harvest citrus in the Valley than in Florida for example.[4] There was a great deal of activity in 1969 toward setting up production of sugar. At one time, approximately 75 percent of the land necessary to operate a processing plant was pledged, but this was not sufficient to start operations. On the other hand, a new packing shed was built the same year and equiped with new machinery which was considered obsolete by California packers.

ABSENTEE OWNERSHIP

Land ownership in the Valley has tended to be a highly speculative venture almost from the origin of commercial fruit and vegetable production.

The 1920's saw a surge of activity by developers to bring in outsiders to purchase parcels of land. There are numerous tales of how promoters enticed persons into the "Magic Valley," as it is sometimes called. Special trains were scheduled to deliver select groups of well chaperoned northerners in to view the wonders of the area. The people were guided along specific roads and met only the right individuals. Care was taken so that only insiders were interviewed and exaggerated reports were given about potential returns on the property. Realtors were not too concerned about the success of a particular venture since they stood ready to act as agent to resell the farm to another unenlightened investor. In recent years, the military has been a prime target for local land brokers. Groups of officers are flown down from various installations throughout the U.S. with all expenses paid. Cases have come to light where senior officers have even put pressure on junior officers to purchase property. Also, there has been a cultivation of the professional people who are looking for means of easing their personal tax burden by writing off agricultural expenses. As a result of these promotional activities, much of the agricultural property is owned by absentee owners. This creates a great deal of distortion in the operation and structure of the rural economy.

If absentee owned, the farm will be operated either by a firm specializing in land care or, quite often, by a tenant, as in the case of vegetables. A caretaker is interested in maximizing his own income and not necessarily that of the owner. It is estimated that about 60 percent of the citrus is owned by non-Valley residents, while the percentage is probably a little lower for vegetables and other commodities. There are a number of consequences to the degree of absentee ownership. The most serious problem is that many of the owners lack adequate knowledge of the

specialized operations in the area. In most cases, they are too far away to maintain a close watch, so the caretaker has a free rein. One cannot always assume equal integrity or ability between caretakers. Quite often the farms are not tended properly, resulting in little or no return to the owner of the parcel, as well as being unsightly. The parcels may end up being quite widely scattered, which makes it more difficult to exercise economies of scale. If the units are contiguous, it is more feasible to mechanize and easier to recruit seasonal labor since better crews prefer larger fields so they can work in one location longer. Not being present at critical times also makes it difficult for procedures to react to rapid changes in the market and weather changes. Quite often smaller producers are packed out last, so close surveillance by the owner is highly desirable, particularly when growing for the fresh market.

SIZE OF PRODUCTION UNIT

As indicated above, the size of the agricultural unit tends to be considerably smaller than the average commercial farm in the U.S. In 1959, according to the Census of Agriculture, the average size farm in Hidalgo County was 227 acres, while in 1964 it had grown to only 257 acres. On the other hand, the average U.S. farm was 303 acres in 1959, and 352 acres in 1964. During the same period, the number of farms fell in Hidalgo County from 3,572 to 2,868. However, there still are over 8,000 separate parcels of land combined in this total. The average for the Valley is closer to the national figure, since the mean size in 1959 was 301 acres, compared to 358 acres in 1964. Farms in Starr County, composed primarily of low yield non-irrigated pasture land, averaged 860 acres in 1959 and increased to 951 acres in 1964. Due to the more labor intensive nature of operations, Hidalgo farms can be efficient on a smaller scale.

DEGREE OF CONCENTRATION

As the above figures indicate, there has been some concentration of ownership and consolidation of farming operations in the Valley. This trend has occurred mainly in the last five years and has normally taken two forms. One form has been the increasing importance of the shippers (packing sheds) in the production of agricultural commodities. This has occurred in the vegetable industry more than any other commodity, generally through taking over smaller producers. The packing sheds historically have been mostly independent operators with no affiliation with large grocery chain stores. They contract ahead with several growers for their output, trying to stagger planting and harvesting schedule among them as much as possible to guarantee an adequate stable supply for packing out. A shipper earns his profit on the packaging or processing charges on each lug or box that passes through his shed. Small producers often experience financial difficulty during the planting, growing, and harvesting of crops under contract. Therefore, it is customary for shippers to extend credit to growers. Wholesale prices vary widely on fresh produce; so a marginal grower may find himself actually barely meeting his marginal costs of production after his output is packed and sold to a broker. On the other hand, the shippers must still be paid and if the grower cannot pay off his loans, he is forced to sell to the shipper or declare bankruptcy. Shippers defend their actions claiming they can't get growers on contract to plant the crop when the shipper would like in order to prevent everyone's crops maturing at the same time. Small growers claim they are discriminated against because either company fields or large operators get packed out first. There has been a sharp drop in the number of sheds packing produce in the last few years and an increase in scale of operations to further weaken the position of the small grower.

The most powerful economic group in agriculture in the Valley is, purportedly, the packing sheds. They are able to exercise a great deal of control over the distribution and sale of fresh produce. Historically, there have been a large number of relatively small independently owned sheds located along the two railroads serving the region, but the trend here, as elsewhere, has been to fewer but larger firms. However, with few exceptions, the packing and processing continues to be owned and operated by local firms. With fewer sheds, crops must be transported greater distances, which has worked a hardship on some small growers. It is now easier for the shippers to get together and agree on common prices, leaving growers with less opportunity to shop around. Shippers are alleged to be one of the few groups making sizeable profits. With the accumulation of land, they are able to control their inputs and are less dependent on individual growers. When questioned about their supposedly high profits, shippers passed the blame on the supermarkets, claiming chain stores dictate the prices they will pay for their produce and turn around and sell it at inflated prices to consumers. Regardless of where the profit goes, shipper-growers have significant economic and political power in the Valley.

EXPERIENCE WITH COOPERATIVES AND MARKETING ORDERS

The other form of consolidation has been the movement to form cooperatives and arrange for marketing orders. Forms of voluntary cooperation have tended to have a very spotty record, and have encountered opposition by shipper-grower associations. Since they have attempted to relieve the marketing problems of growers, packing and processing firms believe cooperatives threaten their control over the market. Valley farmers are fiercely independent by nature, and tend to reject any type of association either employer or employee orientated. In general, there seems to be a distrust

of the motives of fellow farmers. On several occasions in the past, agreements to withhold products from the market were sworn to only to be broken the next morning. However, a viable citrus cooperative has been in operation over two years and claims memberships by over half of the Valley producers. This group has been organized to improve processing and marketing of citrus where the greatest cost reductions are thought to be possible. By setting up their own facilities, they hope to take away some of the control exercised by shippers and brokers.

Marketing orders have been in operation in the Valley in a number of commodities. Support for them has not been unanimous and, consequently, the scope of their operations has been quite limited. They have attempted to establish uniform packaging methods and marketing procedures. Currently, there are orders in lettuce, onions, tomatoes, and citrus. One for carrots was discontinued recently, and there have been orders proposed for other commodities, for example, watermelons.

PROBLEMS OF MARKETING PRODUCTS

Some Valley crops do not fare well in competition with California, Florida, and more recently, Mexico. As indicated earlier, production costs, generally, are not out of line with growers in other regions of the U.S., but growers face difficulty meeting competition in marketing their output. Besides some of the problems mentioned with the facilities for processing, packing, and shipping, there have been questions raised about traditional methods of grading and sales promotion. There has tended to be resistance toward implementing strict grading on some commodities. Texas mixes U.S. No. 1 and 2 citrus in the same bags, allows 10 percent size tolerance versus 5 percent for Florida fruit and allows greater discoloration by area shippers.[5] Some growers feel that housewives will buy Texas products

because of their taste, regardless of appearance. Quite often, the next best alternative for produce which does not meet marketing standards is feed for livestock. Opportunity costs of the alternative choice encourage growers to press for relaxed grading. Many shippers share this view because they do not wish to change their present methods of operation. They believe such a change would necessitate an application of either more capital or labor and the additional resources would reduce their profit margin. Shippers are paid on the basis of how many units are packed out, regardless of quality. Often times short-run profit maximizing policies are more appealing than long-run. One of the methods shippers may use to improve their competitive position is to agree to pack heavy on a commodity of poorer quality for brokers willing to bargain.

Produce from the Lower Rio Grande Valley also has suffered from inadequate sales promotion, research, and technology. Efforts in this area have not matched California or Florida either financially nor with the same degree of consistency. A major factor has been the lack of a combined source of funds pushing a common easily identifiable brand or label. A very ambitious advertising campaign for citrus was launched in the early 1950's, only to have a freeze cut the output from the Valley to a fraction of what it had been. This wiped out the potential supply of citrus as well as the base for assessing costs of the sales campaigning. Texas A&M University has been preoccupied with the production side and has not provided consistent technical market assistance for area farmers. An encouraging sign in this respect has been several recent research projects conducted by the Texas Agricultural Market Research and Development Center. A study of onion sales indicated purchases of the South Texas product might be increased by offering more of a variety of bag size.[6] A similar survey was

made of citrus being sold in several stores in the middle west.[7] Findings indicated that there was little effect on sales when display materials were used, but a 48 percent increase was registered by using coupons placed in local newspapers. Also, as in the case of South Texas onions, more variety in the size of the packages displayed could increase the demand for citrus by area housewives. In another study, it was found that by packing only U.S. No. 1 grapefruit together instead of the normal combination, sales were increased 40 percent.[8] More research of this type is necessary if the Valley agricultural commodities are to become more competitive with other areas of the nation.

PROBLEMS OF WEATHER CHANGES

One of the more perplexing problems facing area producers are the weather conditions. Although the region is semi-tropical and has a relatively high average temperature during the winter months, it is still subject to brief but sometimes severe climatic conditions. A "norther" can blow through and drop the temperature as much as 50 degrees in a matter of hours. Citrus and vegetables, in particular, may be damaged easily by these variations if they occur at a critical time. The Lower Rio Grande Valley experiences as high a probability of a minimum temperature of less than 20 degrees as either Florida, Arizona, or California, but the extremes have caused more damage to Valley citrus than anywhere else. This is due to the fact that temperatures vary more, and prolonged warm periods make the trees less cold hardy than other groves. It is estimated that only about 5 percent of the groves are protected by cold protection systems. This is not surprising when one considers the low profit margin and high initial cost for the equipment. The payout period for this type of investment has been estimated to vary from a minimum of 12 years to a maximum of 24 years.

Besides problems of temperature extremes, output has been hit very hard by a hurricane in 1967 and a drought. In general, the hurricane was less serious because damage was limited to the crops in the ground or on the trees currently. Periodic rains prevented proper cultivation of some land up to as much as six months after the original storm. On the other hand, during a serious drought, their source of normal irrigation water was cut off. Many producers attempted to irrigate by means of wells, only to discover that after prolonged use much of the vegetation was killed by the salts in the well water. The impact of these natural disasters on the output of the state of Texas is greater than in say Florida and California because of the concentration of most of the production of fruits and vegetables in one area.

In addition to these phenomena, a combination of normal wind and insects often damages citrus and young vegetables. The wind causes tree vegetation to rub on the maturing fruit developing blemishes. Most spraying is done by air and the pesticides used on cotton tends to kill off the beneficial insects on citrus trees, allowing fungus to grow on the fruit. Often the fruit is only suitable for juice or to be sold as "junk" produce at a reduced price.

TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

Another local problem is the high cost of transportation for the packed out produce. The Valley is a long distance from any large population concentrations, so must ship virtually all of their output several hundred miles. Interstate freight rates tend to make it more difficult to compete with Florida in the large northern and eastern markets. Home state products would have an advantage normally, but it is alleged that it costs more to ship produce from the Valley to Dallas, than from the Valley to Little Rock

or Oklahoma City. The Texas Railroad Commission limits the number of licenses issued to trucking firms interested in shipping agricultural products to a constant number, which has caused licenses to become capitalized over time. As a result, it is charged that there is not a sufficient number of vehicles available to transport harvested crops from the Valley, and growers are faced with what they consider excessive rates to move their products.

EFFECT OF RECENT CAPITAL SHIFTS ON MARKET FOR VALLEY PRODUCTS

There has been a substantial change in the location of agricultural production in the United States and Mexico in the last five years, and this change has increased competition for winter Texas products. Capital which once was invested in the Lower Rio Grande Valley is now going elsewhere. Most damaging has been the increase in commercial vegetable production in Mexico, but even other areas of Texas have expanded their operations in markets important to the Valley economy. Since Texas concentrates so heavily on the fresh market, timing is extremely important in order to command premium prices. Commodities from Mexico are able to mature earlier than those in South Texas and take some of the edge off the early market. On the other hand, Wintergarden and West Texas areas have put increased pressure on the later market for many commodities. As indicated above, the unreliability of the Valley weather also has tended to be a negative long-run influence.

Because of the threat of more restrictive border policies, investors are turning toward locations which can provide a more certain supply of agricultural manpower. With the restrictions placed on the use of braceros, Mexico becomes more and more attractive for farm investment purposes. There are very few reliable figures available on where the agricultural

investment is going that used to do into Valley operations. The concensus of local leaders is that there has been a significant capital drain to Mexico. In a report published last year, the Economic Research Service studied the effect of Mexican production on U.S. markets for six types of winter produce.[9] Importation of Mexican strawberries, eggplant, cantaloupes, cucumbers, peppers, and tomatoes has increased dramatically since 1960. Imports have had the greatest impact on the Valley economy in tomatoes, with Valley output falling to 10 percent of the amount it had been eight years before, while in the same time period, Mexico increased its exports to the U.S. by 50 percent. Only in cantaloupes has the Valley been able to keep pace with the growth on demand for Mexican produee.

The purpose of discussing production and marketing problems of agricultural producers in the Valley is to point up some of the factors which indirectly determine labor demand. Since factor demand is derived from the volume of agricultural output sold, a grower will be reluctant to hire workers if his marginal revenue does not match or exceed their wage. Critical decisions must be made by the farmer at each stage of maturation whether to employ more water, spray, or labor. Every farmer does not make precise calculations for these values, but he estimates the costs of alternative production methods as closely as possible. Uncertainties due to weather and future prices raise the risk for the agricultural producer, who in turn tries to shift it to the workers.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Connolly, Chan C., "The Seventies, Expected Changes in the Marketing Citrus." Paper given September 19, 1969, to the Texas Citrus Mutual, Edinburg, Texas, p. 7. (mimeograph)

[2]Texas Almanac, 1970-71, Dallas: A. H. Bello Corporation, 1970.

[3]"Survey of Buying Power." Sales Management, New York: Bill Brothers Publications, Inc., 1969.

[4]Connolly, Chan C., "Influence of Marketing on the Mechanization in the Fruit and Vegetable Industry." Paper given at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station Conference, College Station, Texas, January 7-9, 1970, p. 7. (mimeograph)

[5]Connolly, Chan C., "The Citrus Marketing Task for the 1969-70 Season." Paper given to Texas Citrus Exchange, September 12, 1969, Edinburg, Texas, p. 7. (mimeograph)

[6]"A Summary Analysis of In-store Onion Promotion Tests and Test Shipments of Pre-packaged South Texas Onions." Information Report MRC 69-4, Texas A&M University, p. 34.

[7]"The Effect of Point-of-Purchase Display Material on Sales of Fresh Texas Grapefruit." Information Report MRC 69-4, Texas A&M University, pp. 21-2.

[8]Connolly, Chan C., "The Seventies, Expected Changes in the Marketing of Citrus," op.cit.

[9]U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Services, "Supplying U.S. Markets With Fresh Winter Produce." Agricultural Economic Report No. 154, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969.

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

A key to any major improvement in conditions of agricultural workers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas is the acceleration in economic growth of the region. In general, the greatest potential for improving employment conditions lies in the non-farm sector where a higher growth rate will provide better access to jobs in the primary or nonagricultural labor market. The secondary, or farm labor market, is characterized by irregular employment, low wages, and substandard working conditions and little interchange between the farm and non-farm markets. Valley workers, employers and the TEC should be apprised of the fact that in the future more farm workers, and members of their families, will have to be absorbed into non-farm economic activity. However, the extremely low incomes of most current Valley residents illustrates the magnitude of the development task facing the region (see Chapter I).

In addition to the acceleration of overall economic development of the area, several other changes can be instituted to ameliorate pressing current problems through: improving the functioning of labor market institutions to provide better services to workers, both while in the Valley and migrating; decreasing the surplus of labor by regulating the flow of Mexican residents working in the Valley; or developing more effective personnel policies and procedures to increase productivity, thus raising the pay of farm workers; and, if these efforts do not produce any significant rise in living standards and working conditions, resources must be mobilized to encourage farm workers to move from the Valley permanently.

Literally hundreds of recommendations have been offered in the last

solutions which can immediately cure difficulties accumulated over decades. However, the Valley environment presents a formidable obstacle to quick solutions. The majority of area leadership resists efforts to alter the traditional system, which has led to their ascent to power. As a result, most suggested changes in the past were too politically difficult to implement. On the other hand, the following set of recommendations are presented as evolutionary rather than revolutionary suggestions, thus they are more likely to be implemented.

1. Improve the functioning of the local labor market. Conclusions drawn from the present study (as discussed in Chapter I) indicate that serious imperfections are prevalent in the operation of the Valley labor market. A critical need exists to increase the effectiveness of the institutions providing employment information to reduce idle time between jobs. Several changes are required, such as:

   a. Stepping up the outreach activities of the TEC to provide more valid job information to individual workers. Additional field personnel are needed to make farm workers aware of the functions of the TEC. However, since workers underutilize the TEC facilities, the TEC should intensify efforts to make their services available to all farm workers through more neighborhood centers. Initially, it will be necessary to canvass neighborhoods or primary gathering places to distribute information and talk to people. Unemployed crew leaders or farm workers should be hired for the interviewing because they are available when the largest influx of people occurs, plus the fact that farm workers can

identify more easily with them. Greater effort in developing lines of communication with the TEC will decrease the reliance on the grapevine by farm workers and resultant misinformation.

b. Combine the farm and non-farm placement facilities to eliminate alleged discrimination against farm workers by the TEC for not placing more workers in non-farm jobs, and actively seek to increase the exposure of farm workers to the nonagricultural work environment. An attitude prevails in the Valley that the farm placement component of the TEC is employer oriented, and therefore, interested in keeping a large supply of farm labor available at low wages. Before the TEC can reach maximum effectiveness, it must alter its image to the point where farm workers believe utilization of TEC services is economically advantageous. Greater effort must be expended to place farm workers in non-farm jobs when there are no openings in agricultural work. As farm workers gain more non-farm work experience, there is less anxiety on their part to seek nonagricultural work in the future and, eventually shift out of agriculture permanently.

c. Upgrade and standardize the system of reporting employment and wage data so trends can be observed in the Valley agricultural labor market. Results of the Northeast Regional Research Project indicate a need for a change in the gathering, compilation, and dissemination of agricultural labor force statistics.[1] There are serious

inconsistencies in the data reported which restrict the use of the statistics for analysis. Both the Departments of Labor and Agriculture have to develop common definitions, survey techniques and reporting methods, to increase the usefulness of current and future labor data. However, unlike the Northeast, the Valley still has a dual labor market, so there still remains a critical need for adequate agricultural labor statistics separate from nonagricultural. Present statistics do not reflect the extent of hidden unemployment and under employment among Valley farm workers.

d. Encourage employers to develop manpower planning techniques which could increase the predictability of future needs of farm labor. Although the uncertainty created by variations in the weather will never be eliminated, simple models can be formulated which would aid employers and the TEC in determining labor requirements sooner than is currently possible.

2. Improve the scheduling of work for migrants. Although usage of the TEC by farm workers is low in the Valley, workers have the advantages of access to employment information from friends and relatives (see Chapter I). However, while migrating, the "grapevine" is not as well developed and possibly less reliable. To help counteract the lack of job information for migrants, the following actions are suggested:

a. Intensify efforts to sign up people under the Annual Worker Plan and crew leader registration programs. As part of the expansion of the outreach program, interviewers

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of transportation, and location and types of employment. Attention would focus on primarily economic factors, however, the importance of certain social-psychological variables also should be tested.

c. Expand the number of migrant rest stations along the most frequently traveled routes and make maximum use of them as sources of employment information. The Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare and Labor should increase the number of migrant rest stops throughout the country, as well as expand the facilities of present units to make them multipurpose centers serving the employment, housing, health, education, and other emergency welfare needs while enroute to or between jobs. Equiped with the latest electronic communication devises, a manpower specialist at one of the centers could relay information quickly on conditions in his immediate area to other centers or disseminate other job data to individuals using the specialists center.

d. Establish a national data bank for migrant research. In order to improve services to migrants, it is necessary to know who and where they are as much of the time as possible. Attempts at keeping card files on migrants have not been wholly successful, however, with proper coordination and better inputs from public agencies a file could be maintained. If all of the information could be sent to one depository, using comparable collection methods, data would be available to develop a national migrant manpower program.

3. Eliminate or control commuters. Any proposal to improve wages and working conditions among Valley agricultural workers must also include a plan to retard the flow of Mexican residents into South Texas to work. However, the commuter problem is not easily solved. As North indicates, over 5,000 people commute across the border daily, of which over half are actually American citizens living in Mexico.[2] Nearly nine out of every ten commuters in North's sample indicated they would move to the United States, rather than lose their American job should the border close. Even though, as a result of this act, a total of some 30,000 people might have to move, the policy remains as one of the most attractive economic alternatives. The arguments are not convincing (as far as the Valley is concerned) that there would be any severe economic consequences of stopping all Mexican residents from entering to work if the individuals were given enough advance notice. Although stopping of commuting appears to be economically desirable, given sufficient time for transition, there is tremendous political opposition to such a move from both sides of the border.

The most practical solution is to stop issuing new green cards and let the number of present commuters decline as a result of attrition. Force the immigration and naturalization service to check passes more carefully to insure the identity of the holder and exclude illegal entrants. Subject each commuter to a periodic check to validate his entry status, audit employer and employee tax records, and verify that the

commuters employer has conformed to all the appropriate labor laws of the United States.

Commuters are a far more serious problem than viewed in the Nathan Report, which advocated a status quo policy toward them.[3] However, although most of the policy recommendations of North are viable, administration of a commutation tax would be difficult and the levying of the tax possibly illegal.[4]

4. Promote economic development in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The rate of economic growth of the Valley is less than either the United States or Texas, which means a bad situation is getting even worse. To reverse the present trend, several suggestions are offered to stimulate both agricultural and nonagricultural economic activity.

a. Develop and utilize more area resources. For example, process more of the local citrus crop in the Valley rather send it out for the fresh market. A great deal of Valley fruit is damaged during the growing process so sometimes looks inferior to fruit from competitive areas (see Chapter III). However, processing and packaging disguises these defects and, also, provides jobs for local labor.

Additional research on the marketing of Valley fruit and produce is necessary to improve grading, packaging, distribution, and promotional techniques. Although expensive, the services of a national firm would allow access to the latest marketing technology, which is currently inadequate.

Adequate port facilities, low price land, oil and

natural gas, and abundant labor make the region attractive for certain types of manufacturing. By expanding education and training facilities, a major asset of the area, human resources, will increase in attractiveness to all types of industry. However, greater local initiative is required to force state and federal governments to allocate research and program development funds.

Emphasis on regional development in the nonagricultural sector of the Valley has focused primarily on promoting tourism and an expansion of mass merchandising retail outlets. Continued improvement of marketing, health, and housing facilities is mandatory for tourism. In addition, this area should be pushed as a permanent retirement site to provide a stable employment base for Valley workers. Federal funding should be sought for more low income housing units for retirees, as well as additional supportive facilities.

b. Amend Section 809 of the U. S. Tariff Code, which allows unfinished American goods to be exported, processed, and imported back into the United States with duty levied only on the value added by low wage Mexican labor. This concept can only work as a one way street, to benefit a few American companies and Mexican residents, at the expense of American workers. In general, the low income Mexican workers in these plants cannot afford to buy Valley goods and services, therefore, the presence of the plants just across the border does not boost Valley economic

activity. A much more desirable situation would have been for the border industries to have located their facilities on this side of the Rio Grande River. There does not appear to be any practical evidence that the "twin plant" concept recommended by the Nathan Report would stimulate development of Valley industry.[5] However, acceptance of an industrial site in the Valley as a free trade zone by the Department of Commerce, could allow for industrial development as the Nathan Report indicates.[6]

5. Improve agricultural employment practices. Because of rising wage rates and greater difficulty in recruiting farm labor, farm operators must adopt more sophisticated manpower policies. Among these would be:

   a. Establishment of hiring halls to supplement TEC branch offices and make it easier for individuals to obtain job information.

   b. Make a comprehensive study of the utilization and training of agricultural labor to discover methods of increasing productivity and decreasing attrition. Additional information has to be gathered on per unit labor costs for different products using alternative production and harvesting techniques. While conducting the research, utilization of extensive time and motion studies could identify the most efficient methods of doing specific farm tasks. At the same time, necessary skills and appropriate training requirements for each task could be established. As a

result of the implementation of improved production and harvest methods, productivity would increase, therefore, allowing farm operators to pay higher wages.

c. Further research is needed to determine probable costs and returns of several alternative fringe benefit plans, which could make agricultural earnings approach being competitive with nonagricultural incomes. Modern personnel policies also must be applied whenever possible to improve employer-employee relations and enhance the status of farm work. Finally, alternative forms of payment should be analyzed to determine the most effective method of passing on increases in productivity to agriculture workers.

d. Study ways of making farm work more stable by cooperative efforts on the part of employers, workers, employer associations, and possibly through employment agencies and other intermediaries, e.g., rotation of jobs among farms.

6. Encourage permanent migration or resettlement. In the short run at least, the rate of economic growth will be insufficient to provide employment for all Valley residents seeking jobs, so to promote permanent migration there needs to be:

a. A comprehensive analysis of the types of non-Valley and/or non-farm jobs Mexican American farm workers prefer and can adapt to easily, then either find employment for those qualified for available openings or develop training and mobility programs to allow full utilization of farm worker talents and energies. There are numerous jobs which farm workers could transfer current skills to with little or no training

--e.g., feed lot or landscaping operations (see Chapter II). However, a more in-depth study is required to determine the task preference and potential employment opportunities of those farm workers who cannot be absorbed into readily accessible jobs. A combination of basic education and vocational training (preferably OJT) should be made available in the Valley plus a subsistence allowance to encourage individuals to participate. Upon completion of the training program, a specially funded counseling and placement system would find jobs for the workers throughout the United States. Mobility funds should be appropriated for either loans or grants to ease the financial barriers to relocation. Because of the high degree of annual mobility, money does not appear to be a major obstacle to the resettlement of workers out of the migratory stream. An up-to-date file of former farm workers who already have relocated would serve as a useful source of information to prospective relocatees.

b. An evaluation of the work experience of Mexican American graduates of vocational programs, who were former farm workers, is needed to test the effectiveness of alternative training and placement methods. There have been a large number of graduates of vocational programs sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity and Department of Labor in the Valley and a few of the graduates were Mexican American farm workers prior to entering the courses. Unfortunately, there has been no extensive follow up conducted on most of these trainees to discover how successful they were in adapting

to the post-training work environment.

c. An organization created to encourage voluntary migration out of South Texas and agriculture by providing counseling when needed and disseminating information about employment, housing, education, transportation, and health care facilities so individuals can rationally choose the best location to resettle. Immigrants need support in a wide range of services tailored to the cultural and economic background of each individual or family. As a result of the help of a relocation organization, people wishing to settle out of the migratory stream can find adequate information about where the best opportunities are and what to do once the immigrants reach their newly chosen home. In addition, if the relocatees require supportive services in their new home area, the workers or their families know where to go for help.

FOOTNOTES

[1]James S. Holt, Reuben W. Hecht and Neil B. Gingrich, Agricultural Labor Statistics (State College: Pennsylvania State University, 1970).

[2]David S. North, The Border Crossers: People Who Live in Mexico and Work in the United States (Washington: Transcentury Corporation, 1970), pp. 29 and 226.

[3]U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Industrial and Employment Potential of the U. S. - Mexico Border (Washington: Robert R. Nathan Associates, 1968).

[4]North, op. cit., p. 271.

[5]Nathan Report, op. cit., p. 9.

[6]Ibid.

APPENDIX A: HISTORY OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

In order to have a better understanding of the problems facing labor markets, institutions and participants, a brief review of the history and changes in cultures in South Texas will be presented. The Lower Rio Grande Valley has a long history but remained unknown and fairly isolated from the rest of the U. S. until this century. A group of ships under the command of Alvarez de Pineda entered Rio de Palmas or the Rio Grande River in 1519 to map the area and seek a shorter route to the East.[1] They explored the territory for 40 days thus making the Valley the second place in the U. S. visited by Europeans. They found the Valley inhabited by Indians who, although friendly at first, became more hostile toward the Spanish as time passed. Early documents relate how one group after another met death at the hands of the natives.

At the urging of settlers in northern areas of new Spain desiring protection from the Indians and a realization that new France might try to claim the territory, Spanish officials ordered the establishment of colonies along the river. A thorough survey was made of the Valley in 1747 and the first two colonies, Camargo and Reynosa, were settled two years later on the south bank of the river.[2] Although agricultural activity had been conducted for a time on the north bank, the first settlement was not established until 1750.[3] The major centers of commercial activity remained on the south side of the Rio Grande and extensive ranching operations were conducted across the river. Almost all of the land on both sides of the river was given to settlers, military officers and friends of the Crown over the next 80 years. Early grants to settlers in the 1750's were quite small but later awards

often contained several hundred thousand acres. In the early 19th Century, there was an influx of Anglos into the Southwest, but the Valley remained Hispanic in orientation. As a result of the migration there was increased agitation by the new residents to separate from Mexico. But, even though Texas became an independent territory in 1836, this event had little effect on life in the Valley, During and immediately following the war with Mexico (1845-48), there was a movement of non-Spanish (Europeans and Americans) into the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Although the number was small, they had an impact on the growth of commerical activity and the establishment of local governments. In most cases, they made a concerted effort to assimilate into the culture of the region with many marrying children of local ranchers of Spanish descent. Even though they were culturally different, they made an attempt at adapting to the prevailing environment rather than displacing it. This influx from other southern states figured prominently in the support of the Confederacy by people in the area. Brownsville served as a major port to export Texas cottons which produced revenue for the southern cause. In fact, the Valley was the scene of the last battle of the Civil War; on May 13, 1865 (more than a month after the surrender) Confederate soldiers defeated Union troops near Brownsville.[4] Old records of the 19th Century show that Anglos held most of the town and county offices. However, land ownership was still dominated by the descendants of recipients of the original Spanish grants. Despite the flurry of trading activity during the Civil War, the area reverted to a slower economic pace with a heavy reliance on livestock production.

By the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th Century, the type of agriculture changed, the kind of migrant changed and the ability or willingness of in-migrants to assimilate the cultures diminished.

Shifting from cattle to cotton, sugar cane, vegetables, and citrus; the development of irrigation on a large scale; completion of a railroad; the Civil War in Mexico; and the purchasing of large blocks of land by speculators altered the traditional style of life in the Valley as development has elsewhere. The region began to be looked upon more as a part of the United States instead of an isolated outpost on the frontier. Much of the current unrest in South Texas stems from the attitude that the Anglos invaded the area, taking over control of the economic, social and political institutions and developing a culture unique to the region. There is a desire on the part of most Mexican-Americans in the Valley to keep their historical identity with Hispanic culture and still achieve equal status in what they consider to be an Anglo world.

A greater need for labor to plow, plant, cultivate and harvest the new crops developed due to a shift in agriculture away from cattle. Much of this demand was met by hiring migrants from across the Rio Grande. This set the stage for manpower practices which are still in effect today such as the use of aliens. Although utilization of commuters is an accepted part of the life style of the Valley agriculture, this did not become a serious problem until the recent decline in farm labor demand.

Coupled with the change in the type of agricultural production was the development of a gravity irrigation system between 1905 and 1915. This was a highly speculative venture requiring large amounts of initial capital as well as adequate funds for maintenance. Most of the projects were ventures by out-of-state entrepreneurs anticipating high short-run profits. Developers bought tracts of land, irrigated them and then resold them to recover their investments. However,

construction problems and inadequate demand for land forced almost all of the companies into receivership by 1920. As a result of irrigation, more flexibility to agricultural production became possible, particularly in growing vegetables and citrus. To sell the improved land, developers made extravagant claims of the productivity of their so called "Magic Valley".

Vital to the future profit the land developer was access to transportation. The railroad first reached Brownsville in 1904 and expanded to most of the Valley cities by 1929. Large numbers of people were induced by promoters to come to the area on special trains to buy the small blocks of land. Due to high production and transportation costs and inadequate agricultural knowledge few of the buyers made enough to pay off their land. The practice of inducing potential buyers into the area with free transportation is still used as a promotional technique by area realtors. Many Valley residents resent these methods of selling land by developers.

Besides the additional demand for agricultural labor, large numbers of unskilled workers were required to construct irrigation levees and canals as well as the various railroad projects. At about the same time Mexico was experiencing internal political problems. As a result, hundreds of Mexicans fled across the border only with what they could carry. Most of them were fleeing to get away from the dangers of war and roving bands of outlaws (among them Pancho Villa). They were poor and needed work so they served as a ready supply of cheap labor for Valley development projects. Many came as refugees with the intent of returning to Mexico when the situation improved so oftentimes made little attempt to accept the American language and value system. The substantial immigration from Mexico was counter balanced by an influx

of middle to upper income people from other parts of the United States who bought land and came to settle. Their ethnic and income differences created an immediate barrier between the two groups which neither has chosen to completely eliminate even today.

Anglos (typically white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant) considered the Hispanic people as foreigners who should instantly shed all vestiges of their own cultural heritage and replace them with an Anglo value system. Many Mexican Americans in the Valley believe the Anglos are immigrants also and, therefore, should not hold a monopoly over the political, economic, and social structure of the area. Until recently, Mexican Americans took their inferior status as the price for living in the Valley but younger, more vocal Chicanos are questioning their traditional role. In the past, the youths who were frustrated by conditions in the Valley and who wanted something better than farm work could go to San Antonio. However, now they are having a great deal of difficulty finding work in urban areas plus mechanization in agriculture is increasing the flow of people who must seek non-farm jobs.

PATTERN OF CHANGE

There still remains today a wide gulf between the Mexican American and Anglo community based on differences in culture, income, education, employment, political power and ideology. Although most of the young Mexican Americans in the Valley can speak English fluently, some of the older family members cannot. Regardless of the ability to speak English, they prefer to use Spanish. Most Valley residents (Anglo or Mexican Americans) are bilingual and sort of residual dialect has developed called Tex-Mex which is a mixture of Spanish and English. Charro Days, which precede the Lenten season, are the most widely celebrated

holidays outside of Christmas. For a four-day period, the border is left open and people flow back and forth during the festival time.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

A great deal of opposition to the traditional social structure has begun to appear in the last five years which has manifest itself in a number of ways. Several voluntary associations have been formed to publicize current problems and provide a convenient framework for political and economic action. Life expectancy of protest groups tends to be very short because legitimization tends to be a kiss of death for such groups. Older groups such as LULAC (League of United Latin-American Citizens) formed in 1929 and G. I. Forum, started after World War II, have been successful at instilling a certain degree of cultural unity. Modern Mexican American youth are attacking these organizations and calling their members patrons, Tio Tacos (Uncle Toms) or Malinches (traitors). PASO (Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations), created in the early 1950's as a semi-secret political organization, had only limited success and has fallen in disrepute in recent years. The newest groups among the young range from militant MAYO (Mexican American Youth Organization) to nearly paramilitary Brown Berets and MANO (Mexican American National Organization). MAYO has had considerable notoriety by attacking Mexican American officials and also forcing many changes at the local governmental level by means of demonstrations and boycotts (schools, Texas Employment Commission, etc.). La Raza Unidas (united race) is the most recent attempt at a unification of all Mexican American political organizations. A series of meetings have been held over the past two years to establish a viable association of competing groups. Greatest political gains by these associations continue to be at the local level.

AWAKENING GIANT

In the past, Mexican Americans have had difficulty finding a forum to air their grievances or a mechanism to change unfavorable conditions. Political disenfranchisement, either overt or de facto, has contributed to a great deal of isolation of the Valley. During the early part of the 20th Century, many of the new arrivals from Mexico considered their tenure in the United States to be only for a short time so did not get involved. The area could be easily Anglo dominated and problems of lower income groups received little recognition at either the state or national level. A peculiar set of election procedures and alleged threats of reprisal by some local officials have hindered some citizens eligible to vote from exercising their right. Biggest obstacle has been the poll tax in the past or annual registration by January 15th each year now. Due to the transient nature of farm workers, it works a much greater handicap on them. Also, the citizenship of many Texas residents of Mexican descent may not have been clearly established. In addition to this, polling places are often located on the opposite side of turn from Mexican American neighborhoods. Where paper ballots are used, they are marked at tables in the polling places. Oftentimes, it is alleged that local law enforcement officials will sit at the end of the tables or circulate around the room to discourage voting for certain candidates. Most current political activity has centered around breaking the barriers restricting Mexican Americans and trying to get them to register. Even though they have a majority of the eligible voters in many areas they have not had proportionate representation. An exception to this has been the less populous Starr County, where practically all officials are Mexican American.

CHANGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Changes in the structure of production in South Texas from agricultural to more non-agricultural production and mechanization in agriculture have decreased the farm labor. This has tended to increase the relative number of year around resident families who have more of a commitment to changing area problems through collective action. Most observers attribute the origin of the movement for "brown power" to the successful unseating of Anglo candidates in the city elections in Crystal City in 1963. With funds largely supplied by the Teamsters, PASO (Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organization) effectively organized the Chicanos (many of whom worked in agricultural or agricultural related industries). The bitter struggle that ensued generated a substantial degree of animosity on both sides and sent shock waves throughout the Valley.

This experience served as inspiration for other Mexican American candidates to seek office in South Texas. Individual candidates began to make inroads into the Anglo power base in many areas. In Mathis, Texas, Mexican Americans, again with union support, were able to win the city elections in 1965. Although not as violent as Crystal City, the Anglos and Mexicans would not speak to each other and the outgoing administration spent all the money in the city treasury before leaving. Despite early criticism, little support and lack of experience, the reform candidates have made changes. One of the early acts of the new government was to pass a city minimum wage even though it was thought to be unconstitutional at the time.

Both Crystal City and Mathis, although not in the Valley, are home for large numbers of farm workers. Crystal City is modestly called the spinach capital of the world (by local residents) while the Mathis area

concentrates more on cotton and vegetables. Changes in local labor demand in these areas have forced residents to seek alternative employment in low-wage non-farm work or to migrate. Political frustration and economic pressure has created an environment which has led to increased interest in common problems. The La Raza Unidas party successfully won the school board elections in Crystal City this Spring. Differences between the Anglo and Mexican American community in Mathis have widened due to the recent killing of a young, unarmed Anglo doctor who frequently treated Mexican Americans for little or no charge. He was shot by a deputy sheriff under rather mysterious circumstances.

With Crystal City and Mathis to use as a guide, the community organization technique was applied to Rio Grande City and vicinity in Starr County by union-assisted organizers. Although this was not the most economically significant area of the Lower Rio Grande Valley to apply pressure, early activity was calculated to be adequate to set the stage for economic sanctions against large agricultural production and distribution interests in the County. Also, the County was considered to be politically sensitive by organizers because it is over 90 percent Mexican American and, consequently, easier to organize than some other counties. Pressure focused on the operations of La Casita Farms and the Starr Produce Company in 1966. However, harvesting and shipping were completed with little difficulty since an ample supply of commuter greencarders were available at the Roma crossing. A boycott against the La Casita brand melons also met with little success. Texas had passed a large number of restrictive labor laws in 1947 (e.g., it was the first "right-to-work" state) which were now enforced with the help of the Texas Rangers. An example of these is the provision that pickets can stand no closer than 50 feet from each other. Even though the strike

attempt and accompanying boycotts of La Casita products were unsuccessful on the surface, they generated enough anxiety among employers and support among workers that the once passive majority began to display an active interest in reforms. Had it not been for Hurrican Buelah in late 1967, a major confrontation would have taken place in the heart of the Valley in Hidalgo County. The storm washed out or destroyed well over half of the winter crop of fruit and vegetables, and along with it, hope of any immediate economic gains by agricultural workers.

The whole process of new awareness has triggered a sense of identity which has fostered a general movement toward La Raza Unidas. This has been politically effective in several ways, not the least of which has been the mobilization of statewide support for a minimum wage covering both farm and non-farm workers. The organizational attempts in the Valley in 1966 were unsuccessful, but it served to stimulate pressure for economic reforms. To dramatize their plight, a march was staged from Laredo to Austin using a minimum wage goal as their rallying cry. "La Marcha" was not an immediate success since no legislation was passed at that time. However, bills were introduced in each session of the state legislature since that time.

To the surprise of a great number of people the legislature passed, and Governor Preston Smith signed into law in 1969, the first minimum wage law in the history of Texas. The law did not go as far in coverage as its Mexican American backers wished, but it will serve as a precedent for further negotiations. In general, the minimum wage by February 1, 1971, will be 20 cents an hour less than federal standards--$1.40 an hour for nonagricultural and $1.10 an hour for agricultrual workers. However, exemptions significantly restrict the coverage. Nonagricultural workers currently not covered by the state unemployment compensation

are exempt automatically. Since it is estimated that one-third of the employers in Texas are not covered by unemployment compensation, this represents a substantial number of people. Other noteworthy exemptions are domestic workers, individuals under 18, people in amusement and recreation if they work less than seven months a year, and employees of businesses that are owned by families, or hire less than four workers or transact less than $15,000 in annual sales. Any agricultural enterprise which hires less than three-hundred man-days of labor a year also is exempt.

It is doubtful that this act with its extensive exemptions will have the impact that its supporters in the Valley had hoped. The original bill has very few exclusions and may have had some effect on the use of commuters. Most of the covered employers hire Mexican nationals because they will work under poorer working conditions or they are willing to punch out and work additional hours on their own time. In jobs not covered by the minimum wage, hourly pay is quite often lower than $1.10 an hour.

Unrest in the Valley has intensified among younger Mexican Americans. School boycotts were successful setting aside rules prohibiting the speaking of Spanish on school grounds for example. Through MAYO, they demonstrated against the Texas Education Association policy at Elsa-Edcouch and the participants were dismissed from school. A suit was filed in behalf of the ousted students against the school board and principal. The students won their suit and were reinstated; in addition, they received financial remuneration for hardships the incident caused either the parents or the children. Actions by both parties in the school dispute polarized the emotional position of Anglos and Mexican Americans and relations between the two groups are still strained.

Equal educational opportunity for all students has become an important issue. A dual busing system has allowed discrimination against Mexican Americans to continue in Texas. An important desegregation case was won against the Corpus Christi school district in June, 1970, and many of the 26 districts sued by the United States Justice Department recently allegedly discriminated against Mexican Americans. Bilingual education is considered a key in reaching all Mexican Americans but it has yet to become a reality in most Texas schools.

STATUS OF LA CAUSA

Although heavy opposition to some policies have brought changes, local leaders have been successful in stifling some organizational activity. Area of greatest controversy has been the removal of VISTA from several counties in South Texas. The Governor, at the insistence of local officials, removed authorization for personnel to operate because of alleged activities of VISTA workers. Workers were accused of participating in demonstrations against schools as well as city and county government zoning and living policies.

In the Valley, Reverend Edgar Krueger was removed from his migrant ministry post by the Texas Council of Churches (TCC). Rev. Krueger, A United Church of Christ minister, supposedly was relieved of his parish because of his friendliness to Mexican Americans. He then took a job with the TCC as a migrant minister. While serving in that position, he helped form Las Colonias a Villas which has served as a community action and self-help economic cooperative for the numerous Mexican American settlements in the Valley. Rev. Krueger was also active in labor related demonstrations in Starr County and this precipitated

his dismissal. Several threats of the withdrawal of funds from churches prompted the TCC to ask him to resign. He still is very active in organizing Mexican American action against economic discrimination in the Valley but has been hampered by lack of funds.

At present, the Mexican American political movement in the Valley is still in a state of transition. MAYO has been successful in arousing interest among the young people and increasing their political awareness. La Raza Unidas is winning support from greater numbers of the established Mexican Americans. Early objections were raised about the use of La Raza which carries racial overtones. Many of the older leaders from families of Spanish descent prefer not to be lumped with the Aztec of Indian-Spanish descendents of Mexico. Leadership problems have been formidable but will probably tend to decline as the movement gains maturity. Political, economic, and social barriers to improvement in the relative and absolute position of farm workers are still substantial and still present a serious problem to farm worker mobility. Many choose to leave permanently rather than stay and try to change local conditions.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Stambaugh, J. Lee and Lillian J., The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. San Antonio: The Maylor Co., 1954, p. 1.

[2]Ibid, p. 28.

[3]Ibid, p. 29.

[4]Ibid, p. 122.

[5]Ibid, p. 179.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE DESIGN

The Lower Rio Grande Valley was chosen as a site for the field research because of its importance to both local and national agriculture. Most of the problems facing the farm labor market today are present there and it is a vital supplier of migratory farm workers to much of the rest of the United States. Since it is on the border with Mexico, the flow of commuters from across the river has a pronounced effect on conditions in the area. Migration from Mexico still is an important source of seasonal labor for agriculture. The Valley region, composed of the four counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy, make up an identifiable and relatively homogeneous economic area. One or more of the counties appear on almost all lists of the lowest income and highest levels of unemployment in the United States.

Hidalgo County was chosen because of the limited funds available for interviewing and because McAllen-Pharr-Edinburg is a separate labor market encompassing all of Hidalgo County. Labor force statistics on counties are difficult to obtain but estimates are made regularly by the Texas Employment Commission for Hidalgo.

This study was conducted between November, 1968, and April, 1969. Farm activity in the Valley is heaviest during this time which insures the greatest concentration of employers, crew leaders, and farm workers being present. Hidalgo is the largest county in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the most populous in the Valley and contains the largest number of farms in the state of Texas. It serves as the winter residence for more migratory labor than any other county in the state. Also, it is considered to be the most representative of the Valley counties on the basis of its general agricultural and population composition.

After numerous interviews with leaders of agriculture, business, government, and labor unions as well as university research personnel, it was determined that three separate groups would be sampled to yield adequate information. Schedules were prepared and pretested among agricultural employers, crew leaders, and farm worker households. The possibility of using mail questionnaires was considered but rejected due to the political climate in the case of employers and educational attainment of crew leaders and farm workers. Personal interviews were conducted with each group to collect more primary data.

EMPLOYER SAMPLE

A group of agricultural employers were selected from the list of farm operators maintained by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in Edinburg. A separate card is kept for each parcel of land placing it geographically and identifying the operator. If the owner is different from the operator, an additional card records the owner and his address. It is necessary to accumulate the parcels to determine the size of each operator. Farm operator names were stratified by the size of the land farmed into less than 50 acres, 50 to 250 acres, and 250 acres and over. Most of the land is owned by people outside of the Valley and many of the operators do not live in the county. Therefore, only farmers who had a residence within Hidalgo County were singled out. Within the specific operator groups, employers were chosen from each ASCS geographic community in the county. There are marked differences in the types of soil and access to irrigation which influence the method and composition of agricultural production among Valley farms. Citrus and vegetables require a guaranteed water supply while cattle and cotton may be produced on the non-irrigated land in the county. However, cattle are raised profitably in some irrigated property as well. The study would have

been weakened to have all of the producers concentrated in one commodity. Also, it is thought farmers farther from the border have more difficulty recruiting labor than those near the river. It is difficult to determine the composition of production from ASCS records so a good geographic distribution is essential. A total of 25 operators were interviewed with the group containing more larger farms since they are likely to have greater problems in the recruitment and utilization of labor.

As a further check on the list of agricultural employers, a group of names of the largest employers of farm labor was secured from each office of the Texas Employment Commission in Hidalgo County. The McAllen, Edinburg, and Weslaco offices also were able to stratify the farm operators in the group selected. Names on the ASCS list were then cross-checked with those received from the TEC. It was considered necessary to verify the ASCS list to bring it up-to-date and to insure that some large users of farm labor were among the sample to be interviewed. Also, since there are questions on the survey related to the utilization of services of the TEC, there should be some frequent users of their facilities. After cross-checking, the ASCS list proved to be adequate for the purposes of this survey with only one operator having gone out of the farming business.

CREW LEADER SAMPLE

The crew leaders are the most important factor in the farm labor market in the Valley. Most workers and employers rely on them to fill the information gap between the demand for and supply of farm labor. Because of their significance, a separate instrument was administered. However, there is no mandatory registration file of crew leaders available similar to the ASCS list of farm operators. Only those individuals who employ more than ten workers and operate interstate are required to sign

up annually with the Bureau of Employment Secruity. Normally, this is accomplished by going to a representative stationed at the local TEC office in the Valley.

The local offices of the TEC, in addition to the mandatory file, maintain a record of household heads and other persons who may act as crew leaders all or part of the time during the year yet not fall under the requirements of the Crew Leader Registration Act. Using a combination of the two files, the McAllen, Edinburg, and Weslaco offices selected a group of crew leaders. Twenty-five persons were interviewed at their place of residence to gather information for this report.

FARM WORKER SAMPLE

The present study was designed to be a pilot study to yield statistics on regional farm labor problems. Funds for field research were concentrated in interviewing the heads of households in which one or more of the members had worked on a farm job at some time during the preceding year. It was determined that monies were available to conduct approximately 200 interviews throughout Hidalgo County.

During interviews with area leaders a number of difficulties in developing a probability sample were discussed. An institutional survey was considered but rejected because of the lack of adequate lists of farm operators. Also, it was decided that sufficient cooperation might be difficult to gain as a result of the economic and social unrest in the area. The fact that an institutional survey was not used restricted access to data on commuters who would be working for area farmers. The Department of Labor has funded a project dealing with the commuter problem exclusively so this deficiency was not considered serious. On the other hand, interviewing persons currently working for agricultural establishments would exclude a large group of farm workers who may not

have been working at that particular time. Employment opportunities are normally quite scarce so there are many unemployed or not in the labor force a major portion of the time while they reside in the Valley.

Therefore, a household survey was conducted utilizing the cluster sampling technique since no adequate list of farm workers was available. Experience of university researchers and employment service personnel familiar with Mexican Americans and Valley agriculture had shown that farm workers tend to reside in rather identifiable areas. There are very few Negroes in the Valley and none of them have been known to work in agriculture in recent years. It has been several years since crews of blacks have migrated into the region to pick cotton. The TEC farm labor specialists indicated it was a rare occasion when an Anglo-American would come in seeking a job in agriculture in the area. All of the farm workers and crew leaders interviewed in this study were of Mexican or Mexican American descent.

Nearly all of the farm workers in Hidalgo County live off of the farm. Typically, they will be concentrated in high density, low income neighborhoods in the dozen towns and in the many separate settlements called colonias. This is opposed to living in an open country farm dwelling as in some rural areas. Their neighborhood can be identified by the poor condition of the domicile, number of vacant or boarded up houses, out of state license plates on autos parked nearby, and the incidence of trucks with grain bodies or homemade campers on pick-ups visible. To conserve resources and to make a more efficient use of time, only those areas were selected for interviewing.

Each of the TEC offices was asked to select the areas within the towns and various settlements where the farm workers were thought to live. To verify their selections, four blocks were chosen randomly, one

in each quandrant of the towns of Mercedes, Weslaco, and Edinburg. A door-to-door check confirmed that the areas designated by the TEC were accurate. No farm worker households were encountered in blocks outside the specified neighborhoods. The sample blocks were then blocked off and numbered in each community. Then a visual check was made of several blocks to estimate the number of households per block, vacant houses, and farm worker households.

The sample area contained 747 blocks with an average of 10.5 households per block or approximately 7,844 households. It was estimated that about one-third of the households in any block would be farm worker households or 2,615 in the sample area. Every third house in each block was contacted or about 3.5 per block and slightly more than one household of those interviewed per block had done farm work during the year. Approximately 95 percent of the households identified as having performed agricultural activities completed schedules. A total of 223 blocks were chosen randomly and 200 interviews were conducted in the chosen area. The sample rate was 8.52 percent among farm worker households.

APPENDIX C: DETERMINANTS OF ANNUAL INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD AND HOUSEHOLD HEAD

DETERMINANTS OF ANNUAL INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD

Since annual incomes of both households and household heads show rather wide variations, an attempt was made to separate some of the more important factors influencing farm worker earnings. Table C-1 indicates the results of a multiple regression computed for some of these factors. The different variables were selected because they were all thought to be important from looking at descriptive data.

Sex (X_1) of the household head was thought to make a difference in the earning capacity of the household. However, the coefficient of the sex variable was not statistically significant from zero.

The coefficient of the age of the household head (X_2) was statistically significant at the 0.5 level. This means that as a farm worker grows older he becomes more productive and, therefore, earns more. However, the relationship is overstated since older workers are more likely to have larger families.

Home ownership (X_3) appears to be a significant factor. Its coefficient was statistically significant at the 0.5 level. It is not certain whether the relationship occurs because the higher income workers can afford to own housing or the idea of owning property will motivate people to earn more. Other information from interview schedules pointed out the high status given real estate in the consumption budget of the farm worker. Therefore, it is quite probable the incentive of owning one's own home does contribute to higher family incomes.

Households who worked outside the Valley, at least part of the time, made more money than those who spent all of their time in the Valley.

TABLE C-1

SELECTED FACTORS INFLUENCING ANNUAL INCOME

OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS, 1968

VARIABLE[a]	REGRESSION COEFFICIENT	STANDARD ERROR
Sex of Household Head (X_1)	147.16	365.28
Age of Household Head (X_2)	229.54*	101.94
Home Ownership (X_3)	644.44*	315.83
Location of Work:		
Worked in Valley Only (X_4)	-1,015.37	582.49
Worked Mostly in Valley (X_5)	-317.94	550.85
Worked Mostly Outside Valley (X_6)	336.31	510.11
Worked Outside Valley Only (X_7)	207.90	586.95
Number of Household Members Who Worked During Year (X_8)	93.84**	26.02
Weeks Employed by Household Head (X_9)	52.72**	10.44
Constant Term	38.86	
Standard Error of Regression ($Y.X_{1-10}$)	1,785.78	
Fraction of Total Variation Explained by Regression (R^2)	0.39	

[a]Variables were assumed to be linear relative to income (Y) with the following form:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7 + b_8X_8 + b_9X_9$$

*Coefficients are significant at the 0.05 level.

**Coefficients are significant at the 0.01 level.

[b]Dollars per year.

For this reason, the location of work (X_{4-7}) was included. However, even though people who worked mostly outside the Valley made slightly more, the differential was not great enough to be significant.

Regression analysis was used to estimate the coefficients of these independent variables and tests were performed to determine the influence of these variables on the annual income of household units. We conclude from the analysis results that a high degree of correlation exists between length of time spent on the job and the total income. A higher degree of utilization of the time of both the household head and other members will contribute greatly to the differences in earnings between families.

It is estimated that for each week added to the work year, earnings of the household head would be $52.72. Since the head works about 30 weeks a year, 20 weeks more would add $1,054 more to gross income bringing the mean of the household head to $2,749. Although the family still could not move out of the poverty level on one income, the head could provide for the needs of the family better and, assuming the other members of the household worked part of the time, it could relieve some of the pressure. As with farm worker heads, increasing the utilization of household members with adequate manpower planning and labor market information could raise total income substantially.

Results of regression analysis seem to show the probability of families having higher incomes is increased by having more children of working age. Because of the larger families of farm workers and the limited work year, it becomes imperative that the household head make employment decisions based on the economic potential for the whole family unit, not just himself. This increases the difficulty of the head making

a job choice. If the economic status of the family is to be improved, the most immediate need is to lengthen the work year.

What might be an economically wise decision in the short run may not prove to be as valid for the long run well being of the younger members of the household. There is the first necessity of providing for basic family needs of adequate food, clothing, housing, and transportation. These take priority over health care and education for which the price of neglecting or doing without does not normally manifest itself for several years. A rather rigid set of priorities must be established on the limited resources available to the family. It would take an unusual value set that would rank expenditures on education above subsistence spending. Often the choice boils down to working in the field to provide cash for daily necessities or attending school. The temptation is always present to choose additional income because the future cash flow for a farm worker is so uncertain. Lack of adequate diet, health care, and education continues to cause permanent damage to farm worker household members.

Some of these results were described by Dr. Raymond M. Wheeler before the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor on July 20, 1970:[1]

> "We saw rickets, a disorder thought to be nearly abolished in this country, and every form of vitamin deficiency known to us that could be identified by clinical examination was reported. I doubt that any group of physicians in the past 30 years has seen in this country as many malnourished children assembled in one place as we saw in Hidalgo County.
>
> The children we saw have no future in our society. Malnutrition since birth has already impaired them physically, mentally, and emotionally."

DETERMINANTS OF ANNUAL INCOME OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS

The annual income of household heads varies widely as did the earnings

of the whole household. Table C-2 indicates the results of testing several variables which affect the level of income of heads. Some of the same variables were analyzed but with different results in some cases.

Both the size of the household (X_1) and whether home ownership coefficients (X_6) were statistically significant at the 0.5 level. The higher the income the higher the probability of a larger family and ownership of his own home. Certainly the increased pressures of family obligations will increase the incentive for people to work harder on the job and be more aggressive in seeking new and better jobs to decrease periods of unemployment.

On the other hand, the only highly significant variable was the amount of time the heads were employed (X_{15}). This would reinforce the findings of the household and indicate a need to increase the length of the work year to raise annual earnings.

TABLE C-2

SELECTED FACTORS INFLUENCING ANNUAL INCOME OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD HEADS, 1968

VARIABLE[a]	REGRESSION COEFFICIENT[b]	STANDARD ERROR
Size of Household (X_1)	34.33*	17.54
Sex of Household Head (X_2)	190.37	160.32
Age of Household Head (X_3)	11.40	55.91
Length of Time Lived in U.S. (X_4)	-16.81	22.58
Education (X_5)	146.57	79.41
Home Ownership (X_6)	334.28*	136.52
Method of Seeking Work:		
Texas Employment Commission (X_7)	-411.61	249.26
Crew Leader (X_8)	-43.51	133.41
Friend or Relative (X_9)	-62.88	126.98
Employer Directly (X_{10})	113.52	158.41
Location of Work:		
Worked in Valley Only (X_{11})	-175.77	251.02
Worked Mostly in Valley (X_{12})	-188.78	239.22
Worked Mostly Outside Valley (X_{13})	124.79	222.95
Worked Outside Valley Only (X_{14})	109.06	255.63
Weeks Household Head Employed During Year (X_{15})	54.46**	12.00
Constant Term -760.64		
Standard Error of Regression 783.55		
Fraction of Total Variation Explained by Regression (R^2) 0.56		

TABLE C-2, cont.

[a]Variables were assumed to be linear relative to income (Y) with the following form:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7 + b_8X_8 + b_9X_9 + b_{10}X_{10} + b_{11}X_{11} + b_{12}X_{12} + b_{13}X_{13} + b_{14}X_{14} + b_{15}X_{15}$$

[b]Dollars per year.

*Coefficients are significant at the 0.05 level.

**Coefficients are significant at the 0.01 level.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *New York Times*, July 21, 1970, p. 42.

APPENDIX D: STATISTICAL APPENDIX

CHART D-1

TABLE OF MAJOR VEGETABLE PLANTING AND MATURITY DATES IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY*

VEGETABLE PLANTING AND MATURITY DATES

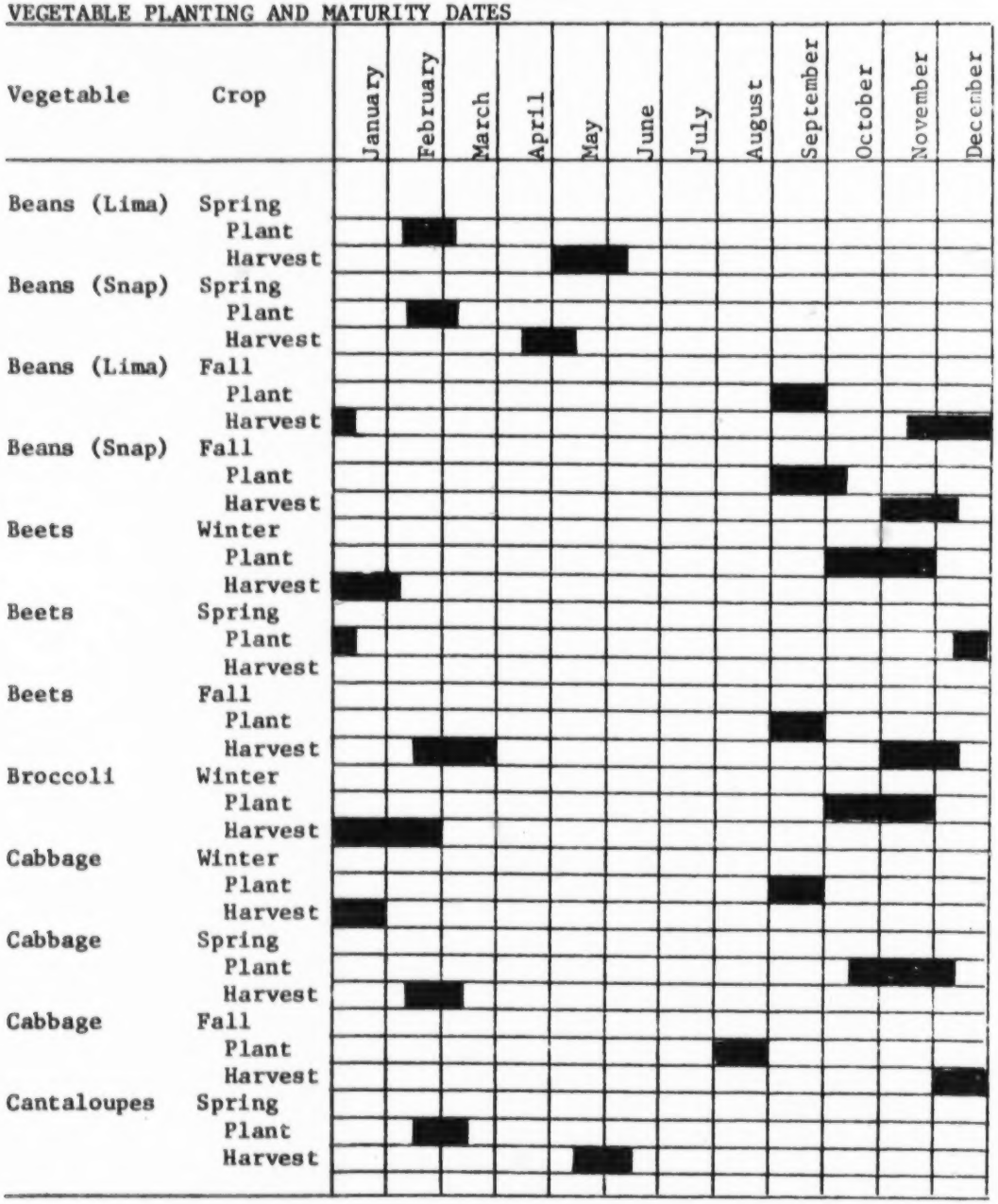


CHART D-1 (cont.)

VEGETABLE PLANTING AND MATURITY DATES

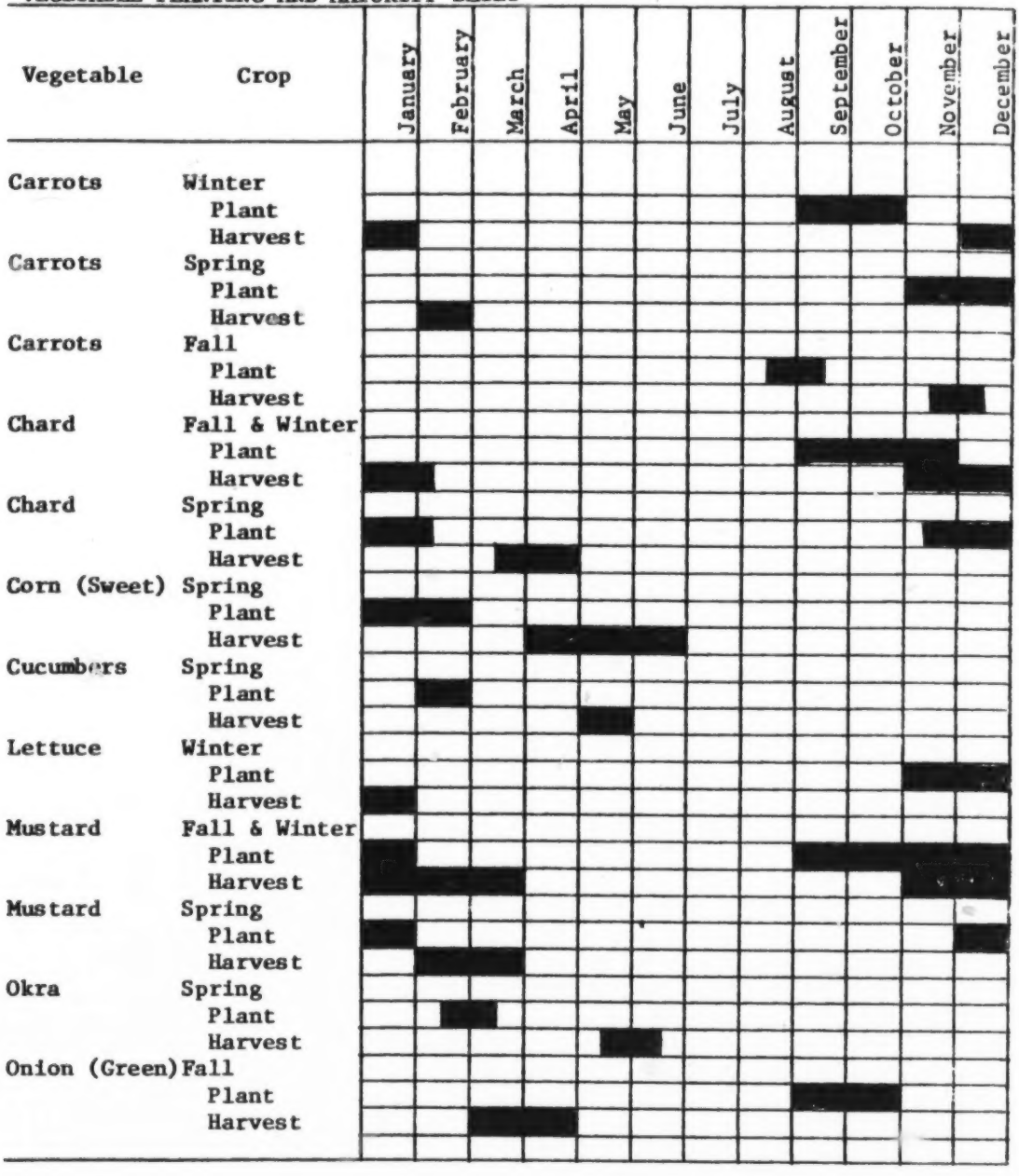


CHART D-1 (cont.)

VEGETABLE PLANTING AND MATURITY DATES

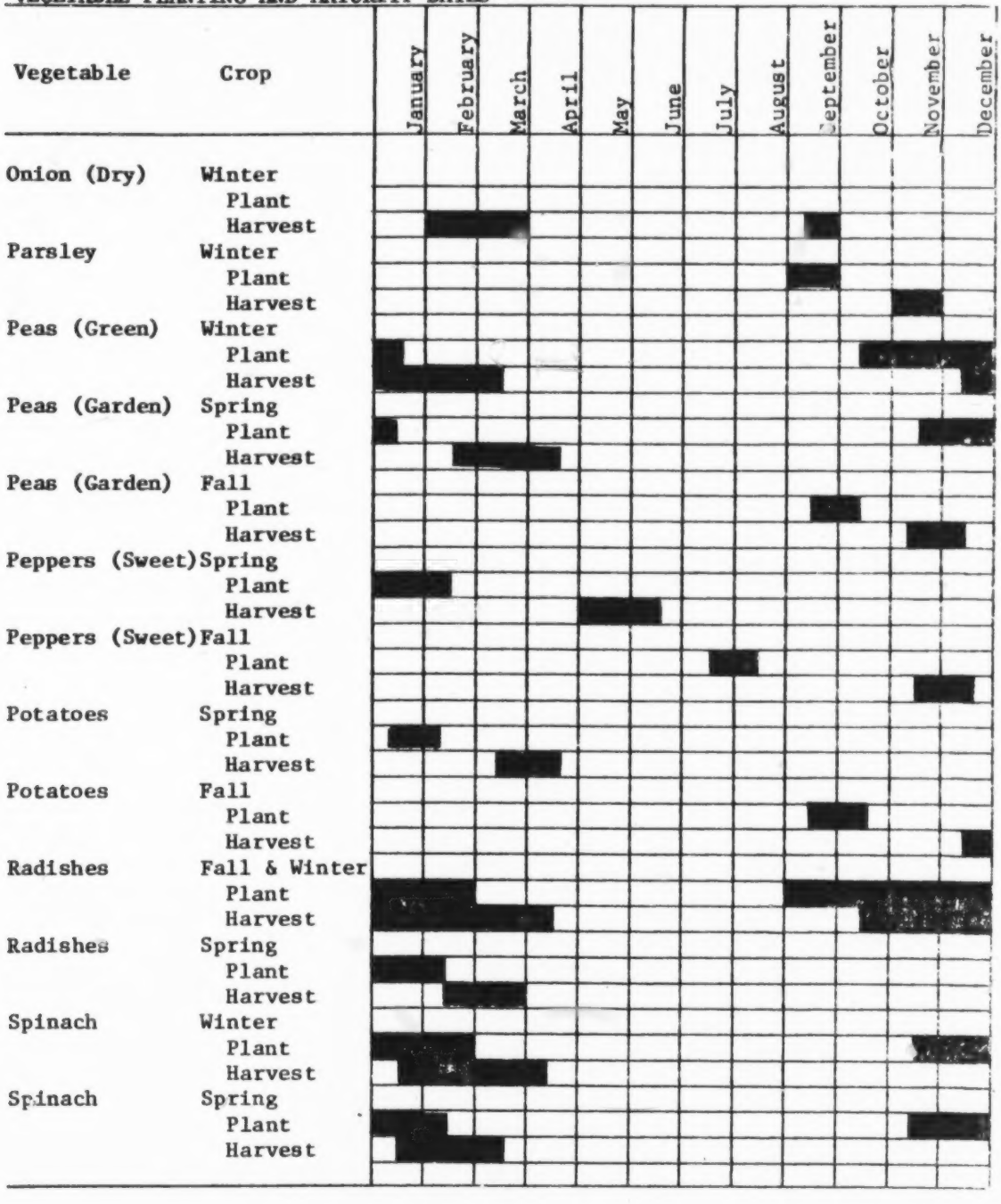
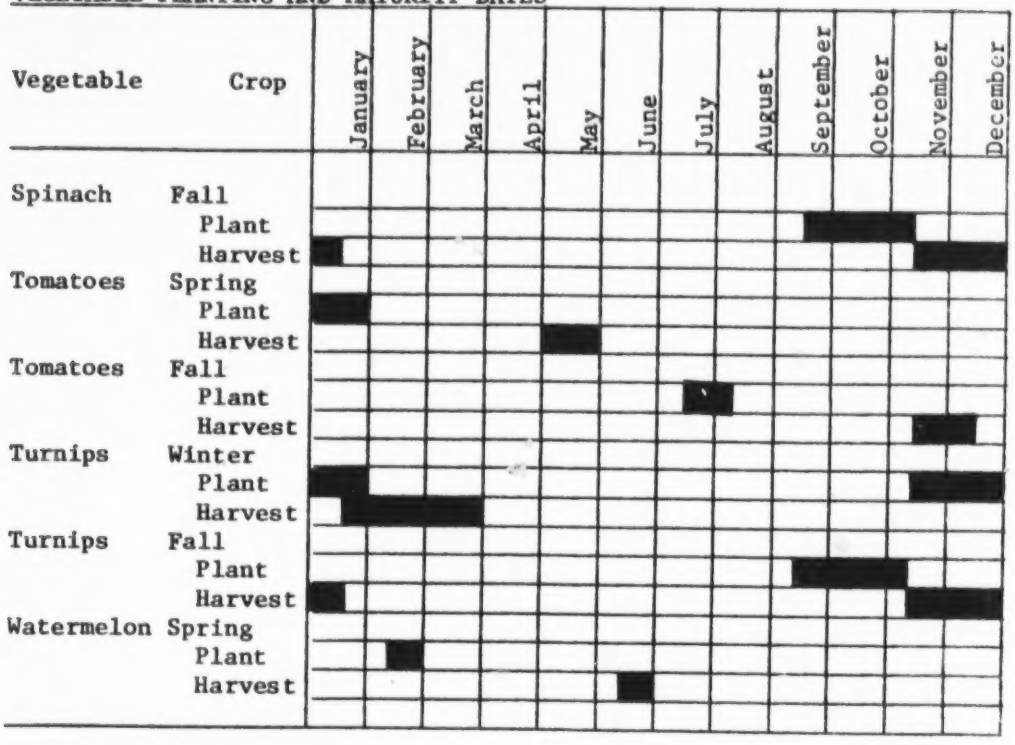


CHART D-1 (cont.)

VEGETABLE PLANTING AND MATURITY DATES



*Source--Texas Agricultural Experiment Station

Shaded area denotes period during which either planting or harvesting generally occurs.

(The foregoing list does not include all vegetables grown in the Lower Rio Grande Valley but primarily those grown commercially and in sufficient volume to ship to other markets.)

TABLE D-1

NUMBER OF SEASONAL HIRED WORKERS EMPLOYED

AT PEAK LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY 1964 - 1969

MONTH/YEAR	NUMBER
April 1964	33,030
April 1965	29,840
April 1966	25,215
April 1967	25,540
April 1968	21,185
April 1969	21,280

Source: Texas Employment Commission

TABLE D-2

SEASONAL HIRED FARM WORKERS EMPLOYED IN LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY 1/

BY MONTH, 1968

CROP 2/	JAN.	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
Total	5,485	9,205	12,680	21,185	17,555	15,650	7,520	9,945	10,670	11,430	16,655	16,970
Tomatoes	60	200	270	720	925	3,300	1,025	135	655	720	935	835
Lettuce	290	585	160	40	0	0	0	40	200	570	1,110	1,110
Peppers	50	85	170	400	475	920	280	585	1,250	995	2,300	1,675
Onions	355	655	1,360	5,195	1,100	0	0	35	200	395	955	780
Carrots	415	1,220	1,990	1,865	910	0	0	85	600	805	1,330	2,150
Melons	0	35	365	1,355	1,585	1,255	140	0	45	75	0	0
Citrus	1,620	1,995	2,160	2,070	2,120	2,260	2,230	2,280	2,605	2,980	3,500	3,985
Cotton	715	1,265	2,560	5,660	5,775	5,685	1,910	5,820	3,045	860	600	985
All Other	1,980	3,165	3,645	3,880	4,665	2,230	1,935	965	2,070	4,030	5,925	5,450

1/ Consists of Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Kenedy and Willacy Counties

2/ In addition to the crops listed, significant amounts of seasonal labor are also used in sorghum grain, cabbage, spinach, potatoes, beans, and a variety of other vegetables.

Source: Texas Employment Commission

TABLE D-3

EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATE FOR BROWNSVILLE: JANUARY 1964 THROUGH DECEMBER 1969
(Thousands)

		MONTH										
		JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
1964	Farm Employment	8.9	8.8	8.8	9.2	10.5	10.9	10.6	10.4	7.5	8.5	9.0	9.2
	Non-farm Employment	34.3	34.8	34.8	34.9	35.2	35.2	36.0	35.6	34.6	34.5	34.8	35.1
	Rate of Unemployment	8.9	8.4	9.3	8.7	8.6	9.5	8.0	7.9	7.9	7.6	8.0	8.4
1965	Farm Employment	9.0	8.8	9.0	9.2	10.2	10.5	10.0	10.0	7.8	8.7	9.4	9.7
	Non-farm Employment	35.2	35.1	35.8	35.8	35.7	35.1	35.7	36.2	35.4	35.2	35.6	36.7
	Rate of Unemployment	7.6	8.4	7.6	8.5	8.3	9.0	8.0	7.0	6.9	6.2	6.7	6.1
1966	Farm Employment	9.0	9.0	9.3	10.0	10.0	11.5	8.5	8.0	7.8	7.8	8.7	8.1
	Non-farm Employment	36.6	36.8	37.4	37.3	36.8	37.0	37.2	38.4	37.0	36.9	37.0	37.6
	Rate of Unemployment	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.8	7.3	8.1	6.2	5.8	6.5	6.8	6.4	5.3
1967	Farm Employment	7.8	7.7	8.8	9.0	10.0	9.6	7.0	8.8	5.8	1.3	2.3	2.9
	Non-farm Employment	37.0	37.8	38.0	37.9	37.7	37.6	38.1	38.8	37.6	37.7	37.8	38.4
	Rate of Unemployment	5.9	5.8	6.1	6.3	6.2	7.3	5.1	6.5	8.4	8.3	5.6	4.5
1968	Farm Employment	3.9	4.8	6.1	9.3	7.0	7.8	4.7	6.4	6.2	6.2	6.9	7.0
	Non-farm Employment	37.6	37.7	38.1	38.9	38.6	38.2	38.2	38.6	38.3	37.1	37.9	39.0
	Rate of Unemployment	5.4	4.9	4.9	5.6	6.2	7.1	5.6	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.4	5.7
1969	Farm Employment	6.7	7.1	7.7	7.9	7.8	9.2	4.7	7.2	6.2	5.8	6.1	6.0
	Non-farm Employment	38.9	38.6	39.4	39.7	38.8	38.1	38.5	39.9	38.3	38.2	38.7	34.5
	Rate of Unemployment	5.6	6.1	5.5	6.2	6.9	7.8	6.3	5.5	6.5	5.8	6.8	5.7
Change in percentage between 1964 and 1968-69 in Farm Employment													
	1964 to 1968	-56.0	-45.0	-31.0	1.1	-33.3	-28.4	-57.5	-38.5	-17.3	-27.1	-23.3	-23.9
	1964 to 1969	-24.7	-19.3	-12.5	-18.5	-25.7	18.5	-55.7	-30.8	-17.3	-31.8	-32.2	-34.8

Source: Texas Employment Commission

TABLE D-4

EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATE FOR MCALLEN: JANUARY 1964 THROUGH DECEMBER 1969
(Thousands)

	MONTH											
	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
1964 Farm Employment	11.0	11.8	11.9	12.4	13.8	14.7	13.9	13.7	10.9	11.0	10.9	11.3
Non-farm Employment	36.6	36.4	37.6	37.6	37.9	37.2	35.3	35.0	34.9	35.5	37.7	38.0
Rate of Unemployment	8.3	8.2	7.3	7.3	6.9	8.1	7.0	6.9	6.4	6.9	7.3	6.8
1965 Farm Employment	11.3	11.4	11.8	12.3	13.2	14.0	13.5	13.5	11.2	11.2	11.3	12.0
Non-farm Employment	38.2	38.3	38.6	38.6	37.9	37.2	37.0	36.3	36.3	37.1	38.2	40.3
Rate of Unemployment	6.7	6.8	6.5	5.6	6.5	7.2	6.2	6.1	5.8	6.1	6.8	5.8
1966 Farm Employment	12.5	12.7	12.1	14.5	12.0	13.2	10.0	10.9	10.9	12.6	16.6	15.0
Non-farm Employment	40.0	40.2	40.1	40.3	39.1	40.0	39.7	40.3	40.4	40.1	41.7	43.0
Rate of Unemployment	5.9	5.7	5.2	4.8	4.8	5.7	6.0	5.3	5.5	5.3	6.1	5.8
1967 Farm Employment	15.8	16.2	16.0	18.2	17.5	14.9	12.8	11.5	11.2	5.7	7.0	8.2
Non-farm Employment	42.7	42.5	42.7	43.2	42.5	42.0	41.8	41.2	41.5	42.4	44.2	45.2
Rate of Unemployment	5.8	5.6	5.3	5.3	5.5	6.7	6.4	5.8	6.5	5.5	6.6	6.0
1968 Farm Employment	6.5	9.5	11.9	6.3	15.3	14.2	10.3	11.0	11.9	12.1	15.5	15.9
Non-farm Employment	43.9	44.2	44.5	45.7	44.3	43.1	40.5	40.1	42.1	44.0	46.0	48.2
Rate of Unemployment	5.9	5.9	5.4	5.5	5.1	6.5	6.5	5.4	5.1	5.6	7.0	5.4
1969 Farm Employment	16.0	15.3	14.7	17.5	16.0	16.7	10.8	11.3	10.1	11.5	14.0	13.4
Non-farm Employment	49.0	48.7	48.8	49.0	47.0	44.9	41.4	41.2	40.9	41.9	44.4	46.0
Rate of Unemployment	5.2	6.3	4.8	4.8	5.4	6.9	6.5	6.3	5.9	5.9	6.8	6.3
Change in percentage between 1964 and 1968-69 in farm employment												
1964 to 1968	-40.9	-22.9	0	31.5	-10.9	-3.4	-25.9	-19.7	9.2	10.0	42.2	40.7
1964 to 1969	45.5	29.7	23.5	41.1	15.9	13.6	-22.2	-17.5	-7.3	4.5	28.4	18.6

Source: Texas Employment Commission

TABLE D-5

EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES FOR BROWNSVILLE AND MCALLEN: ANNUAL AVERAGE, 1964-69

YEAR AND LABOR FORCE STATUS	BROWNSVILLE	MCALLEN
1964 Farm Employment[a]	9.35	12.27
Non-farm Employment[a]	34.98	36.64
Rate of Unemployment[b]	8.43	7.28
1965 Farm Employment	9.35	12.22
Non-farm Employment	35.62	37.83
Rate of Unemployment	7.52	6.34
1966 Farm Employment	8.97	12.75
Non-farm Employment	37.16	40.40
Rate of Unemployment	6.49	5.50
1967 Farm Employment	6.75	12.91
Non-farm Employment	37.90	42.65
Rate of Unemployment	6.33	5.91
1968 Farm Employment	6.35	12.53
Non-farm Employment	38.18	43.88
Rate of Unemployment	5.81	5.77
1969 Farm Employment	6.86	13.94
Non-farm Employment	38.46	45.26
Rate of Unemployment	6.20	5.92
Percentage Change in Farm Employment		
1964 to 1968	31.68	1.08
1964 to 1969	26.81	15.07

Source: Texas Employment Commission

[a]Thousands
[b]Percent

TABLE D-6

SEASONAL HIRED FARM WORKERS IN LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY BY CROP ACTIVITY AND WAGE: DECEMBER 1968

CROP ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKERS	WAGES
Citrus Main. (Irr)	16,970	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Carrots (Irr)	2,310	" "
Cabbage (Irr)	2,150	" " ; .25 Sack
Citrus Harvest	1,680	.12 - .24 Crate
Peppers, Bell (Irr)	1,675	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Lettuce (Irr)	1,575	" "
Tomatoes (Irr)	1,110	" "
Onions (Irr)	835	" "
Cotton (Irr)	780	" "
Beans, Green (Irr)	625	1.15 - 1.25 Hr.
Broccoli (Irr)	560	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Cotton (DL)	470	" "
Beets, Red (Irr)	315	.80 - 1.15 Hr.
Parsley (Irr)	305	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Cucumbers (Irr)	230	" "
Peas, Canning (Irr)	220	.80 - 1.15 Hr.
Squash (Irr)	215	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Spinach (Irr)	200	" "
Sorghum Grain (Irr)	185	.80 - 1.15 Hr.
Sorghum Grain (DL)	175	1.00 - 1.25 Hr.
Cauliflower (Irr)	160	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Turnips (Irr)	150	" "
Mustard (Irr)	130	" "
Peppers, Hot (Irr)	100	.80 - 1.15 Hr.
Collards (Irr)	95	.80 - 1.15 Hr.
Peas, Green (Irr)	75	1.15 Hr.
Endive (Irr)	70	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Escarole (Irr)	65	" "
Celery (Irr)	50	1.15 Hr.
Radishes (Irr)	30	.80 - 1.25 Hr.
Sweet Corn (Irr)	25	1.00 - 1.25 Hr.
Corn, Field (DL)	25	1.00 - 1.25 Hr.
Potatoes, Irish (Irr)	10	.80 - 1.15 Hr.
Okra (Irr)	5	1.15 Hr.

Source: Texas Employment Commission

TABLE D-7

DAY HAUL ACTIVITIES AT POINTS OPERATED BY THE

TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

IN THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY, 1968

TOWN	DAYS OPERATED DURING YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS DURING YEAR
Brownsville	313	42,967
Edinburg	182	8,300
Hidalgo	220	7,116
Progresso	254	14,495
TOTAL	969	72,878

Source: Texas Employment Commission

TABLE D-8

AGE OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD HEADS BY YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED

AGE	TOTAL		EDUCATION									
			LESS THAN ONE YEAR		1-4		5-8		9-11		12 & Over	
	Number	Per-Cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent	Number	Per-cent
16-19	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	3	7.7	1	25.0	1	100.0
20-24	10	5.0	2	1.9	2	3.8	6	15.4	0	0	0	0
25-34	29	14.5	5	4.8	5	9.7	17	43.7	2	50.0	0	0
35-44	58	29.0	29	27.9	20	38.3	8	20.3	1	25.0	0	0
45-54	42	21.0	23	22.1	16	30.8	3	7.7	0	0	0	0
55 & Over	56	28.0	45	43.3	9	17.4	2	5.2	0	0	0	0
	200	100.0	104	100.0	52	100.0	39	100.0	4	100.0	1	100.0

TABLE D-9

SIZE OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS BY SEX OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL		MALE		FEMALE	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-2	23	11.5	14	8.6	10	29.5
3-4	42	21.0	36	21.8	3	8.8
5-6	45	22.5	34	20.4	9	26.3
7-8	49	24.5	40	24.2	5	14.7
9-10	25	12.5	26	15.8	6	17.8
11 & Over	16	8.0	16	9.2	1	2.9
	200	100.0	166	100.0	34	100.0

TABLE D-10

SIZE OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD	16-19		20-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55 & Over	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-2	2	40.0	1	10.0	3	10.3	4	6.9	1	2.4	13	23.2
3-4	2	40.0	6	60.0	5	17.2	5	8.3	4	9.5	17	30.2
5-6	1	20.0	3	30.0	9	31.1	14	24.2	7	16.6	9	16.1
7-8	0	0	0	0	9	31.1	14	24.2	16	38.1	6	10.8
9-10	0	0	0	0	3	10.3	12	20.9	11	26.1	6	10.8
11 & Over	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	15.5	3	7.3	5	8.9
	5	100.0	10	100.0	29	100.0	58	100.0	42	100.0	56	100.0

TABLE D-11

SIZE OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD BY EDUCATION OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD*

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL		EDUCATION									
			LESS THAN ONE YEAR		1-4		5-8		9-11		12 & Over	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-2	23	11.5	14	13.4	3	5.7	6	15.4	1	25.0	0	0
3-4	42	21.0	22	21.2	7	13.5	8	20.5	2	50.0	0	0
5-6	45	22.5	22	21.2	8	15.4	12	30.8	0	0	1	100.0
7-8	49	24.5	17	16.3	18	34.6	10	25.5	0	0	0	0
9-10	25	12.5	21	20.2	8	15.4	2	5.1	1	25.0	0	0
11 & Over	16	8.0	8	7.7	8	15.4	1	2.7	0	0	0	0
	200	100.0	104	100.0	52	100.0	39	100.0	4	100.0	1	100.0

*Last year of school completed

TABLE D-12

AGE OF ALL MEMBERS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

AGE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Under 14	496	39.9
14-15	88	17.1
16-19	172	13.8
20-24	104	8.3
25-34	89	7.2
35-44	125	10.0
45-54	86	6.9
55 & Over	82	6.6
	1242	100.0

TABLE D-13

IMMIGRANT FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD HEADS BORN IN MEXICO

BY LENGTH OF TIME IN VALLEY AND AGE AT TIME OF MIGRATION

YEARS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS			
	Lived in Valley		Age at Migration	
1-6	9	10.7	9	10.7
6-10	10	11.9	5	5.9
11-15	14	16.7	7	8.3
16-20	13	15.5	15	17.8
21-25	13	15.5	13	15.7
26-30	4	4.8	4	4.8
31-40	5	5.9	16	19.0
41-50	9	10.7	9	10.7
51 and over	7	8.3	6	7.1
	84	100.0	84	100.0

TABLE D-14

LENGTH OF TIME HOUSEHOLD HEADS WERE

ACTIVE AT FARM WORK

YEARS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS	PERCENT
1-5	33	16.5
6-10	27	13.5
11-15	33	16.5
16-20	20	10.0
21-25	27	13.5
26-30	17	8.5
31-35	12	6.0
36-40	16	8.0
41-50	15	7.5
	200	100.0

TABLE D-15

PRIMARY LOCATION OF WORK BY

FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD

PLACE	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENT
Valley	31	15.5
Texas	19	9.5
Michigan	37	18.5
Ohio	25	12.5
California	15	7.5
Other States in		
West North Central*	37	18.5
Pacific	4	2.0
Mountain	24	12.0
East South Central	4	2.0
South Atlantic	4	2.0

*Also includes Wisconsin

TABLE D-16

PRIMARY LOCATION OF WORK BY SIZE OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD AND AGE AND EDUCATION OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD

ITEM	VALLEY ONLY		MOSTLY INSIDE		MOSTLY OUTSIDE		OUTSIDE VALLEY ONLY	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Size of Household								
1-2	7	22.8	2	3.3	10	12.2	5	14.3
3-4	8	25.8	16	26.3	13	15.9	2	7.7
5-6	8	25.8	13	21.2	17	20.7	5	19.3
7-8	5	16.0	19	31.2	17	20.7	4	15.3
9-10	1	3.2	5	8.2	20	24.4	6	23.1
11 & Over	2	6.4	6	9.8	5	6.1	4	15.3
	31	100.0	61	100.0	82	100.0	26	100.0
Age								
16-19	0	0	2	3.3	2	2.4	1	3.8
20-24	1	3.2	3	4.8	6	7.3	0	0
25-34	2	6.4	11	18.3	15	18.3	1	3.8
35-44	5	16.0	18	29.2	28	34.2	7	26.9
45-54	11	35.6	8	13.2	14	17.1	9	34.7
55 & Over	12	38.8	19	31.2	17	20.7	8	30.8
	31	100.0	61	100.0	82	100.0	26	100.0
Education								
Less Than One	19	61.3	31	50.9	40	48.8	14	53.9
1-4	10	32.3	17	27.8	18	21.9	7	26.8
5-8	2	6.4	12	19.7	20	24.4	5	19.3
9-11	0	0	1	1.6	3	3.7	0	0
12 & Over	0	0	0	0	1	1.2	0	0
	31	100.0	61	100.0	82	100.0	26	100.0

TABLE D-17

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY SEX: EMPLOYED, 1968

WEEKS EMPLOYED	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS					
	TOTAL		MALE		FEMALE	
	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)
0	12	6.0	9	5.4	3	8.8
1-4	2	1.0	1	0.6	1	2.9
5-13	12	6.0	6	3.6	6	17.6
14-26	46	23.0	34	20.5	12	35.3
27-29	18	9.0	15	9.0	3	8.8
30-39	54	27.0	48	28.9	6	17.6
40-47	33	16.5	32	19.3	1	2.9
48-49	10	5.0	9	5.4	1	2.9
50-52	13	6.5	12	7.2	1	2.9
	200	100.0	166	100.0	34	100.0
Average Weeks Employed	30		32		21	

TABLE D-18

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY SEX: ACTIVELY UNEMPLOYED, 1968

WEEKS UNEMPLOYED	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS					
	TOTAL		MALE		FEMALE	
	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)
0	58	29.0	43	25.9	15	44.1
1-2	17	8.5	13	7.8	4	11.8
3-4	26	13.0	22	13.2	4	11.8
5-8	35	17.5	31	18.7	4	11.8
9-13	33	16.5	31	18.7	2	5.9
14-20	21	10.5	19	11.4	2	5.9
21-26	6	3.0	5	3.0	1	2.9
27-39	3	1.5	1	0.6	2	5.9
40-49	0	0	0	0	0	0
50-52	1	0.5	1	0.6	0	0
	200		166		34	
Average Weeks Actively Unemployed	7		7		6	

TABLE D-19

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY SEX: INACTIVELY UNEMPLOYED, 1968

WEEKS INACTIVELY UNEMPLOYED	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS					
	TOTAL		MALE		FEMALE	
	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)
0	45	22.5	39	23.5	6	17.6
1-2	31	15.5	29	17.5	2	5.9
3-4	27	13.5	25	15.6	2	5.9
5-8	35	17.5	28	16.9	7	20.6
9-13	38	19.0	33	19.9	5	14.7
14-20	17	8.5	9	5.4	8	23.5
21-26	7	3.5	3	1.8	4	11.8
	200	100.0	166	100.0	34	100.0
Average Weeks Inactively Unemployed	6		5		10	

TABLE D-20

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY SEX: NOT IN THE LABOR FORCE, 1968

WEEKS NOT IN LABOR FORCE	TOTAL		SEX			
			MALE		FEMALE	
	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)
0	32	16.0	30	18.1	2	5.9
1-2	39	19.5	35	21.1	4	11.8
3-4	21	10.5	20	17.0	1	2.9
5-8	32	16.0	25	15.6	7	20.6
9-13	40	20.0	35	21.1	5	14.7
14-20	16	8.0	9	5.4	7	20.6
21-26	7	3.5	3	1.8	4	11.8
27-39	1	0.5	0	0	1	2.9
40-49	2	1.0	1	0.6	1	2.9
50-52	10	5.0	8	4.8	2	5.9
Total	200	100.0	166	100.0	34	100.0
Average Weeks Not in Labor Force	9		8		15	

TABLE D-21

EMPLOYMENT OF MALE HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY MAN-WEEKS WORKED PER MONTH, 1968

Weeks Worked	Month											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	(Number)											
0	62	56	42	38	30	19	16	21	27	49	55	64
1	5	7	3	5	12	1	3	5	6	8	9	5
2	34	30	29	27	29	16	25	19	18	29	25	25
3	12	16	21	20	27	30	27	29	29	16	18	21
4	55	57	11	76	68	22	95	92	21	64	60	7
5			60			78			65			44
Total	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166	166
	(Percent)											
0	37.3	33.7	25.3	22.9	18.1	11.4	9.6	12.7	16.3	29.5	33.1	38.6
1	3.0	4.2	1.8	3.0	7.2	0.6	1.8	3.0	3.6	4.8	5.4	3.0
2	20.5	18.1	17.5	16.3	17.5	9.6	15.6	11.4	10.8	17.5	15.6	15.6
3	7.2	9.6	12.6	17.0	16.3	18.1	16.3	17.5	17.5	9.6	10.8	12.6
4	33.1	34.3	6.6	45.8	41.0	13.2	57.2	55.4	12.6	38.6	36.1	4.2
5			36.1			47.0			39.2			26.5

[a]Although household heads were not employed some months, the family may have received income from other members of the household.

TABLE D-22

EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY MAN-WEEKS WORKED PER MONTH, 1968

Weeks Worked	Month											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	(Number)											
0	18	15	13	9	12	8	11	9	18	19	17	20
1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	2
2	6	7	4	9	8	7	9	6	2	6	4	0
3	1	1	3	3	3	5	6	4	2	2	3	6
4	9	10	1	12	11	3	8	10	2	6	8	1
5			11			10			9			5
Total	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
	(Percent)											
0	52.9	44.1	38.2	26.5	35.3	23.5	32.4	26.5	52.9	55.9	50.0	58.8
1	0	2.9	0	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	11.8	2.9	2.9	5.9	5.9
2	17.6	20.6	11.8	29.5	23.5	20.6	26.5	17.6	5.9	17.6	11.8	0
3	2.9	2.9	8.8	8.8	8.8	14.7	17.6	11.8	5.9	5.9	8.8	17.6
4	26.5	29.4	2.9	34.3	32.4	8.8	23.5	29.4	5.9	17.6	23.5	2.9
5			32.4			29.4			26.5			14.7

TABLE D-23

EMPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY MAN WEEKS WORKED PER MONTH, 1968

Weeks Worked	Month											
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	(Number of Households)											
0	92	81	76	74	50	16	13	20	35	56	89	97
1	2	4	2	4	10	4	4	7	8	12	7	4
2	20	26	19	22	30	17	33	23	16	28	15	16
3	7	7	12	10	12	28	24	26	16	11	6	8
4	24	27	5	35	38	20	71	69	17	38	28	3
5			31			60			53			17
Total	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145	145
	(Percent of households)											
0	63.4	55.9	52.4	51.0	34.5	11.0	9.0	13.8	24.1	38.6	61.4	66.9
1	1.4	2.8	1.4	2.8	6.9	2.8	2.8	4.8	5.5	8.3	4.8	2.8
2	13.8	17.9	13.1	15.1	20.7	11.7	22.8	15.9	11.0	19.3	10.3	11.0
3	4.8	4.8	8.3	6.9	11.7	19.3	16.6	17.9	11.0	7.6	4.1	5.5
4	16.6	18.6	3.4	24.1	26.2	13.8	49.0	47.6	11.7	26.2	19.3	2.1
5			21.4			41.4			36.5			11.7

TABLE D-24

ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME CLASS AND NUMBER OF WORKERS IN FAMILY, 1968

ANNUAL EARNINGS	WORKERS IN HOUSEHOLD											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	TOTAL
	(Number)											
1-500	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
501-1000	11	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
1001-1500	6	6	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
1501-2000	9	5	2	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
2001-2500	8	7	4	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	24
2501-3000	4	9	4	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	24
3001-3500	3	3	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
3501-4000	4	4	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
4001-4500	1	3	3	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	10
4500-5000	1	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	9
5001-6000	0	3	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
6001-7000	0	2	0	2	5	1	3	0	0	0	0	13
7001-8000	0	0	3	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
8001-Over	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Total	54	49	28	25	29	6	0	2	0	0	1	200
	(Percent)											
1-500	3.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.5
501-1000	5.5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.0
1001-1500	3.0	3.0	0.5	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.5
1501-2000	4.5	2.5	1.0	2.0	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	11.5
2001-2500	4.0	3.5	2.0	1.0	0.5	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	12.0
2500-3000	2.0	4.5	2.0	2.0	1.0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	12.0
3001-4000	1.5	1.5	2.0	0.5	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.0
4001-4500	0.5	1.5	1.5	0	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	5.0
4500-5000	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.5	1.0	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	4.5
5001-6000	0	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	6.5
6001-7000	0	2.0	0	1.0	2.5	0.5	1.5	0	0	0	0	6.5
7001-8000	0	0	1.5	0.5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.5
8001 & Over	0	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0.5	4.0
	26.0	24.5	14.0	12.5	14.5	3.0	3.0	0	1.0	0	0.5	100.0

TABLE D-25

ANNUAL EARNINGS OF MALE HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY INCOME CLASS AND AGE, 1968

Annual Earnings	Age						
	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and over	Total
				(Number)			
0	0	0	0	2	0	6	8
1-500	0	0	1	1	4	4	10
501-1000	0	1	1	7	7	10	26
1001-1500	1	3	3	11	7	8	33
1501-2000	2	2	2	7	4	4	21
2001-2500	0	2	8	4	3	6	23
2501-3000	0	1	5	5	4	4	19
3001-3500	0	0	4	2	2	0	8
3501-4000	1	0	2	5	2	3	13
4001-4500	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
4501-5000	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Total	4	9	26	46	36	45	166
				(Percent)			
0	0	0	0	4.3	0	13.3	4.8
1-500	0	0	3.8	2.2	11.1	8.9	6.0
501-1000	0	11.11	3.8	15.2	19.4	22.2	15.7
1001-1500	25.0	33.3	11.5	23.9	19.4	17.8	19.9
1501-2000	50.0	22.2	7.7	15.2	11.1	8.9	12.6
2001-2500	0	22.2	30.8	8.7	8.3	13.3	13.8
2501-3000	0	11.1	19.2	10.9	11.1	8.9	11.4
3001-3500	0	0	15.4	4.3	5.6	0	4.8
3501-4000	25.0	0	7.7	10.9	5.6	6.7	7.8
4001-4500	0	0	0	2.2	5.6	0	1.8
4501-5000	0	0	0	2.2	2.8	0	1.2
Percent of Total	2.4	5.4	15.9	27.7	21.7	27.1	100.0

Median annual earnings for males = $1,695
Mean annual earnings for males = $1,813
Mean annual earnings for males and females = $1,695

TABLE D-26

ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FEMALE HEADS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY INCOME CLASS AND AGE, 1968

Annual Earnings (From All Sources)	Age						
	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and over	Total
				(Number)			
0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
1-500	0	0	1	2	0	3	6
501-1000	1	0	2	4	3	2	12
1001-1500	0	0	0	3	2	2	7
1501-2000	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
2001-2500	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
2501-3000	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
3001-3500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3501-4000	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	1	1	3	12	6	11	34
				(Percent)			
0	0	0	0	16.7	0	9.1	8.8
1-500	0	0	0	16.7	0	27.3	17.6
501-1000	0	0	0	33.3	50.0	18.2	35.3
1001-1500	0	0	0	25.0	33.3	18.2	20.6
1501-2000	0	0	0	0	16.7	9.1	5.9
2001-2500	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.9
2501-3000	0	0	0	8.3	0	9.1	5.9
3001-3500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3501-4000	0	0	0	0	0	9.1	2.9
Percent of Total	2.9	2.9	8.8	35.3	17.6	32.4	100.0

Mean annual earnings for females = $1,007
Median annual earnings for females = $ 834

TABLE D-27

COMBINED ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS OTHER THAN HOUSEHOLD HEADS BY INCOME CLASS, 1968

COMBINED ANNUAL EARNINGS OF HOUSEHOLD	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS[a]	PERCENT
1-500	18	12.4
501-1000	28	19.3
1001-1500	19	13.1
1501-2000	13	9.0
2001-2500	11	7.6
2501-3000	13	9.0
3001-3500	11	7.6
3501-4000	9	6.2
4001-5000	8	5.6
5001-6000	8	5.6
6001-7000	4	2.8
7001 & Over	3	2.1
	145	100.0

[a]55 households had no one working except household heads

Mean annual earnings = $2,297

TABLE D-28

ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLDS

BY INCOME CLASS AND LOCATION WORKED, 1968

ANNUAL EARNINGS	LOCATION					
	VALLEY ONLY		VALLEY AND TEXAS ONLY		OUT OF TEXAS PRIMARILY	
	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)	(Number)	(Percent)
1-1000	12	40.0	3	16.7	8	5.3
1001-2000	9	30.0	3	16.7	26	17.1
2001-3000	3	10.0	2	11.1	43	28.3
3001-4000	3	10.0	6	33.3	20	13.2
4001-5000	1	3.3	2	11.1	16	10.5
5001-6000	1	3.3	0	0	12	7.9
6001-7000	1	3.3	2	11.1	10	6.6
7001-8000	0	0	0	0	9	5.9
8000 & Over	0	0	0	0	8	5.3
	30	99.9	18	100.0	152	100.1

TABLE D-29

AGRICULTURAL LABOR SENT OUT OF TEXAS THROUGH LICENSED AGENTS BY STATE OF DESTINATION: 1965-68

STATE	1965		1966		1967		1968	
	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)
California	6,020	15.0	5,907	16.2	679	2.0	1,016	2.8
Colorado	6,523	16.2	5,438	14.9	649	1.9	5,880	16.4
Idaho	1,871	4.6	1,660	4.6	1,988	5.8	1,782	5.0
Illinois	428	1.1	103	.3	436	1.3	318	.9
Iowa	33	.1	497	1.4	465	1.4	825	2.3
Kansas	1,159	2.9	931	2.6	1,287	3.8	2.198	6.1
Michigan	5,631	14.0	4,000	11.0	3,732	10.9	4,242	11.8
Minnesota	5,518	13.7	4,959	13.6	6,131	17.9	5,983	16.7
Montana	1,900	4.7	784	2.2	1,335	3.9	1,365	3.8
Nebraska	3,532	8.8	4,478	12.3	3,778	11.1	3,793	10.6
North Dakota	2,654	6.6	2,376	6.5	1,899	5.6	2,702	7.5
Ohio	2,750	6.8	1,906	5.2	1,591	4.7	2,012	5.6
Oregon	334	.8	467	1.3	974	2.9	215	.6
Utah	1,201	3.0	1,007	2.8	968	2.8	456	1.3
Washington			236	.6	303	.9	261	.7
Wisconsin	7	.01	71	.2	364	1.1	392	1.1
Wyoming	630	1.6	930	2.6	1,107	3.2	1,308	3.6
Total No. of Workers	40,251		36,463		34,158		35,846	

Source: Texas Bureau of Labor Statistics

TABLE D-30

AGRICULTURAL LABOR SENT OUT OF TEXAS THROUGH TEXAS EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION BY STATE OF DESTINATION: 1965-68

STATE	1965		1966		1967		1968	
	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)
Colorado	2,606	3.9	2,346	3.0	3,368	3.9	987	1.3
Idaho	4,592	7.5	4,618	6.0	4,515	5.3	5,461	7.4
Illinois	5,143	7.8	6,440	8.3	6,017	7.0	4,984	6.8
Indiana	5,678	9.6	7,657	9.9	8,561	10.0	6,011	8.2
Iowa	371	.6	1,140	1.5	1,196	1.4	307	.4
Michigan	15,303	23.1	23,545	30.4	26,199	30.6	27,896	37.9
Minnesota	819	1.2	728	.9	1,170	1.3	1,294	1.8
Montana	3,021	4.6	2,537	3.3	2,963	3.5	2,446	3.3
Ohio	9,734	14.7	9,957	12.5	10,700	12.9	8,963	12.2
Oregon	1,686	2.6	2,043	2.6	2,520	2.9	1,660	2.3
Washington	1,916	2.9	2,282	2.9	2,210	2.6	1,285	1.8
Wisconsin	7,294	11.0	7,361	9.5	8,837	10.3	6,577	9.0
Wyoming	2,520	3.8	1,959	2.5	2,144	2.5	2,177	3.0
Total	66,185		77,498		85,574		73,460	

Source: Texas Employment Commission

TABLE D-31

AGRICULTURAL LABOR SENT OUT OF STATE BY LICENSED LABOR AGENTS

FROM THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY BY COUNTY: 1965-68

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS		PERCENT OF WORKERS FROM VALLEY	NUMBER AND PERCENT OF WORKERS FROM COUNTIES IN VALLEY							
	FROM TEXAS	FROM VALLEY		CAMERON		HIDALGO		STARR		WILLACY	
				(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)	(No.)	(%)
1965	40,251	14,669	36	5,762	39	7,622	52	309	2	742	5
1966	36,463	14,948	41	5,060	34	8,881	59	170	1	826	6
1967	34,158	14,406	42	4,984	35	8,321	58	258	2	843	6
1968	35,846	14,958	42	4,906	33	9,166	61	170	1	743	5

Source: Texas Bureau of Labor Statistics

TABLE D-32

FARM CASH INCOME

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS

1948-68

1948	$118,149,000
1949	129,652,000
1950	116,232,000
1951	214,614,000
1952	114,378,000
1953	121,946,000
1954	132,427,000
1955	127,027,000
*1956	131,245,000
*1957	134,234,964
*1958	161,975,770
*1959	178,625,317
*1960	154,792,530
*1961	153,053,000
*1962	171,739,716
*1963	142,955,068
*1964	175,874,526
*1965	195,749,909
*1966	187,336,632
*1967	214,179,336
*1968	156,413,000

Source: University of Texas Bureas of Business Research
*Source: County Agents

TABLE D-33

FARM CASH INCOME FROM MARKETING LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY OF TEXAS, 1967+

ITEM	CAMERON	HIDALGO	STARR	WILLACY	TOTAL
Cotton	$28,193,834	$ 30,245,406	$ 450,000	$11,129,422	$ 70,018,662
Corn	126,000	550,000	2,500	8,000	686,500
Grain Sorghum	8,168,662	10,944,000	500,000	3,825,000	23,437,662
Citrus Fruit*	1,811,940	12,683,582	4,500	603,980	15,104,002*
Vegetables	8,327,000	30,613,050	4,000,000	3,250,000	46,190,050
Hay & Ensilage	962,000	1,900,000	750,000	15,000	3,627,000
Pastures	387,000	750,000	500,000	340,000	1,977,000
Nurseries	1,822,000	3,150,000	---	16,000	4,988,000
TOTAL CROPS	$49,798,436	$ 90,836,038	$6,207,000	$19,187,402	$166,028,876
Cattle, Calves, Hogs, Sheep & Lambs	8,423,000	17,984,060	5,250,000	6,426,000	38,083,060
Poultry	11,400	35,000	1,500	1,000	48,900
Eggs	444,000	800,000	4,500	115,000	1,363,500
Milk	1,725,000	4,515,000	750,000	---	6,990,000
TOTAL LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS	$10,603,400	$ 23,334,060	$6,006,000	$ 6,542,000	$ 46,485,460
All Others	610,000	1,000,000	15,000	40,000	1,665,000
TOTAL CASH INCOME FROM AGRICULTURE 1967	$61,011,836	$115,170,098	$12,228,000	$25,769,402	$214,179,336

Source: County Agents

+Government subsidies on cotton are included.
*Income based on FOB price of citrus

TABLE D-34

TEXAS CITRUS FRUIT PRODUCTION

IN BOXES
(1 3/5 Bu. Boxes)

1947-58 - 1967-68

YEAR	TOTAL	ORANGES	GRAPEFRUIT
1947-48	28,400,000	5,200,000	23,200,000
1948-49	14,700,000	3,400,000	11,300,000
1949-50	8,160,000	1,760,000	6,400,000
1950-51	10,200,000	2,700,000	7,500,000
1951-52	500,000	300,000	200,000
1952-53	1,400,000	1,000,000	400,000
1953-54	2,100,000	900,000	1,200,000
1954-55	4,000,000	1,500,000	2,500,000
1955-56	3,800,000	1,600,000	2,200,000
1956-57	4,400,000	1,600,000	2,800,000
1957-58	5,500,000	2,000,000	3,500,000
1958-59	6,500,000	2,300,000	4,200,000
1959-60	7,900,000	2,700,000	5,200,000
1960-61	10,300,000	3,500,000	6,800,000
1961-62	4,800,000	2,200,000	2,600,000
1962-63	110,000	40,000	70,000
1963-64	740,000	240,000	500,000
1964-65	2,880,000	880,000	2,000,000
1965-66	5,100,000	1,300,000	3,800,000
1966-67	8,978,000	2,827,000	6,151,000
1967-68	3,800,000	1,000,000	2,800,000

Source: County Agents

TABLE D-35

COTTON PRODUCTION

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

1948-68

(Data is on Basis of 500 Lbs. Bales)

YEAR	TOTAL	CAMERON	HIDALGO	STARR	WILLACY
1948	335,357	115,396	122,202	8,239	88,520
1949	542,720	223,529	193,153	13,639	112,399
1950	328,284	140,386	105,755	2,418	79,725
1951	627,549	238,683	277,417	11,836	99,613
1952	316,428	92,919	148,063	3,606	61,840
1953	262,646	93,075	124,115	3,267	42,189
1954	412,157	158,237	158,890	6,087	88,943
1955	392,200	144,643	183,030	2,700	61,827
1956	402,585	143,804	176,023	3,284	79,023
1957	280,689	94,657	124,919	1,989	59,124
1958	400,675	141,595	165,192	3,176	90,212
1959	467,093	144,951	200,904	9,192	112,046
1960	362,263	122,371	162,352	6,871	70,669
1961	342,113	115,574	149,619	6,528	70,392
1962	424,916	166,615	166,727	7,407	84,167
1963	278,661	119,414	116,181	3,925	49,141
1964	325,315	134,387	119,743	4,867	66,218
1965	392,157	154,721	169,544	2,292	62,600
1966	253,420	108,974	99,069	3,125	42,252
1967	316,328	121,026	135,054	4,313	55,935
1968	243,767	94,681	98,050	2,984	48,052

Source: County Agents

TABLE D-36

WORKERS SENT OUT-OF-STATE & FEES AND TAXES PAID

BY LICENSED AGENTS - 1968

AGENCY	NUMBER OF WORKERS	FEES & TAXES
American Crystal Labor Agency	9,761	$ 6,750
Benavides & Benavides Farm Labor Agency	1,579	1,900
Frank Cavazos Labor Agency	926	1,300
Chamizal Farm Labor Agency	238	950
Consolidated Employment Agency, Inc.	5,049	3,350
El Paso Farm Labor Recruiting Agency	146	950
Empire Labor Agency	653	950
Great Western Employment Agency	15,185	6,100
Migrant Labor Service	128	950
Rogers Walla Walla Employment Agency	37	1,900
U. & I Labor Agency, Inc.	2,044	2,580
TOTALS	35,846	$ 27,950

*$8,250 was collected from companies who did not recruit labor in 1968.

Source: Texas Bureau of Labor Statistics

TABLE D-37

FARM WORKER HOUSEHOLD BY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

EMPLOYED AT SOMETIME DURING YEAR, 1968

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS EMPLOYED	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENT
1	54	27.0
2	49	24.5
3	28	14.0
4	25	12.5
5	29	14.5
6	6	3.0
7	6	3.0
8	0	0
9	2	1.0
10	0	0
11	1	0.5
	200	100.0